



A Government for Xlandia



A Government for Xlandia

The Buck Institute for Education

The Buck Institute for Education (BIE) is a not-for-profit (501c3) research and development organization working to make schools and classrooms more effective through the use of problem and project based instruction. Founded in 1987, BIE received permanent funding from the Leonard and Beryl Buck Trust, and receives funding for specific projects from foundations, schools, school districts, state educational agencies, and the federal government. BIE's current programs are organized around three objectives:

1. *Engaging Learners*: BIE offers problem based curriculum units for high school economics, government, and world history. The BIE *Project Based Learning Handbook* is used by teachers throughout the United States to plan, implement, and assess standards-focused projects that motivate students and enhance their learning.
2. *Supporting Teachers*: Professional development workshops in Problem Based High School Social Science and Project Based Learning (PBL) are given several times each year at the BIE offices in Novato, California. BIE also provides customized workshops on-site at schools and districts by request.
3. *Showing Results*: BIE extensively evaluates its curricular materials and training strategies to assess their impact on students and teachers, and to determine the conditions that facilitate and impede their effectiveness.

For further information, visit www.bie.org.

John Mergendoller, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Copyright © 2004 by the Buck Institute for Education, 18 Commercial Blvd., Novato, CA 94949

All rights reserved. For permission to reproduce any part of this publication, please contact BIE, (415) 883-0122.

Graphic design: Pam Scrutton, San Francisco, CA



A Government for Xlandia

Table of Contents

PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
INTRODUCTION	2
PURPOSE AND RATIONALE	2
PLACEMENT IN CURRICULUM	2
CONCEPTS TAUGHT	3
OBJECTIVES	3
CONTENT STANDARDS	4
TIME REQUIRED	5
UNIT OVERVIEW	5
RESOURCES	6
LESSON MATERIALS	6
THE SEQUENCE OF THE UNIT	7
PROCEDURE	8
<i>Entry point</i>	8
<i>Framing of the problem</i>	8
<i>Knowledge inventory (know/need to know)</i>	8
<i>Teachable moments and dialogues</i>	9
<i>Research and resources</i>	10
<i>The problem log</i>	10
<i>Exit from the problem</i>	15
<i>Wrap-up and debriefing</i>	16
DO'S AND DON'TS	17
APPENDIX I: STUDENT HANDOUTS	18
APPENDIX II: LESSON MATERIALS	31
APPENDIX III: ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND OTHER RESOURCES	48

A Government for Xlandia

Problem Statement



How can we, as members of the United Nations Task Force on Xlandia's Government, recommend the most appropriate form of constitutional democratic government and provide advice on how to develop it so that Xlandia becomes a stable democratic nation?

★ Introduction

Using the problem based learning approach, this unit puts students into the role of members of a U.N. task force representing several different democratic nations. The task force must advise a fictitious nation just emerging from a long dictatorship about the various forms and fundamental features of constitutional democracy. These include parliamentary vs. presidential systems, unitary vs. federalist systems, the powers of each branch of government, and the conditions under which democracy flourishes. There are two stages to the unit. First, students are asked to research and report on the system of government in the nation they represent so they can compare notes with other task force members. Second, the task force develops a joint recommendation on the most appropriate combination of features of government for Xlandia. It then presents the recommendation to a committee representing various interest groups in Xlandia.

★ Purpose and Rationale

This unit compares forms of democratic government and reviews such “constitutional basics” as limited vs. unlimited government, checks and balances, and the nature and purposes of a constitution. In addition to the basic structures of government which all citizens should know, this unit teaches students that there is more than one way to organize a democracy, and that each system has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, in a system of shared powers like the United States, the separation of power into three distinct branches creates some inefficiency, such as when Congress and the president are from different political parties and cannot agree on legislation. In contrast, the parliamentary systems used by most of the world's democracies feature a chief executive and a majority of the legislature who are from the same party, which means they can more quickly agree upon and enact policies. Democratic systems also differ in regard to the relationship of the national government to other units of government (unitary vs. federalist systems), and in how citizen representation is determined.

This unit also teaches that constitutional democratic government can only survive in the presence of certain social, economic, and political conditions. Students today need to reflect on what makes democracy work, how fragile it can be, and how it must be nurtured by its citizens.

★ Placement in Curriculum

This unit may be taught at various points during a high school course on U.S. Government/Civics. It could come near the beginning of the course, as a way to teach the fundamental principles and structures of American democracy and compare our system with others. Or, if used later in the course, the unit can serve as a vehicle for examining other democracies, reflecting on the societal conditions that sustain democracy, and reviewing fundamental concepts. A complete listing of content standards associated with each unit in the Buck Institute for Education (BIE) “Problem Based Government” series can be found in the **Problem Based Government Overview**. The tables under *Content Standards* show the standards addressed by this unit.

★ Concepts Taught

A Government for Xlandia is designed to teach the following concepts:

- Checks and balances
- Confederal system
- Constitution
- Constitutional democracy
- Democracy
- Direct democracy
- Federal system
- Limited vs. unlimited government
- Parliamentary system
- Presidential system
- Representative democracy
- Republic
- Separation of power
- Shared powers
- Unitary system

Teachers can also cover the following concepts using this unit:

- Aristocracy
- Authoritarian systems
- Civil rights
- Communism
- Dictatorship
- Fascism
- Feudalism
- Monarchy
- Rule of law
- Socialism
- Totalitarianism
- Tyranny

★ Objectives

By participating in this unit, students will:

- Understand the characteristics of limited and unlimited government
- Explain the purposes of a constitution
- Understand basic features of a democracy
- Compare key differences between democratic forms of government
- Learn how democratic systems work in particular modern nations
- Understand that no one system is perfect
- Appreciate the organic nature of effective governments and how they must fit a particular time and place
- Recognize that successful democracies protect the rights of individuals and groups, including minority factions
- Recognize that democratic government requires certain societal conditions in order to be sustained
- Read, write, listen, and make oral presentations more effectively

★ Content Standards

A citizen of a democracy must understand the foundation on which democracy is built: a constitution that describes and limits the powers of government. A citizen of the world needs to know that while there are different ways to design a democratic government, the government must fit the needs of the particular nation if democracy is to survive. **A Government for Xlandia** addresses the following *National Standards for Civics and Government*, Center for Civic Education, 1994, for grades 9 through 12.

Standard	Concept	
I. A.	Definition and Purpose of Government	*
I. B.	Characteristics of Limited and Unlimited Government	✓
I. C.	Nature and Purposes of Constitutions	✓
I. D.	Alternative Constitutional Systems	✓
II. A.	U.S. Constitutional System	*
II. B.	Distinctive American Characteristics	*
II. C.	American Political Culture	*
II. D.	American Constitutional Values and Principles	*
III. A.	Constitutional Restraints: Shared and Limited Powers	✓
III. B.	Organization of the National Government	*
III. C.	Organization of State and Local Governments	
III. D.	The Rule of Law	
III. E.	Choice and Opportunity for Participation	
IV. A.	World Politics	*
IV. B.	U.S. Relations with the World of Nations	
IV. C.	U.S. Influence in the World of Nations	
V. A.	Citizenship	
V. B.	Rights of Citizens	
V. C.	Responsibilities of Citizens	
V. D.	Civic Traits Needed to Improve Democracy	*
V. E.	Civic Participation	*

✓ = a standard that is addressed with this curriculum

* = a standard that could be addressed with this curriculum

A Government for Xlandia addresses the following *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, developed by the National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, for high school.

Standard	Concept	
VI.	POWER, AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE	
A.	Individual Rights, Roles, and Status	*
B.	The Purpose of Government	✓
C.	Mechanisms Used to Balance Competing Needs and Wants	*
D.	National Response to Conflicts	
E.	Comparative Political Systems	✓
F.	Conflict and Cooperation Among Nations	
G.	Role of Technology in Conflict Resolution	
H.	Applying Political Science Theories to Issues and Problems	*
I.	Evaluating Government Achievement	
J.	Preparing and Defending Public Policy Papers	
X.	CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES	
A.	Key Democratic Republican Ideals	✓
B.	Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities	*
C.	Evaluating Selected Public Issues	
D.	Forms of Civic Participation	
E.	Influence of Forms of Participation on Public Policy	
F.	Public Policy Analysis and Political Actors	
G.	Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy and Decision-Making	
H.	Relationship of Policy and Behavior to Democratic Ideals	
I.	Policy Statement and Action Plan for a Public Issue	
J.	Participate in Activities for the Common Good	

✓ = a standard that is addressed with this curriculum

* = a standard that could be addressed with this curriculum

★ Time Required

5-6 days (45- to 60-minute periods)

★ Unit Overview

Students receive a written memo from the Secretary-General of the United Nations that places them in the role of U.N. advisors to the fictional nation of Xlandia, which has just had a successful rebellion against a long-time dictator. The task force is asked to recommend a form of government appropriate for Xlandia. Students are given a profile of Xlandia describing its geography, demographics, and history, as well as its political, economic, and social conditions.

Students are first assigned a democratic nation to represent, and then they research its form of government. The teacher may determine the size of the task force by selecting some or all of these seven nations for students to represent: Australia, Philippines, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Uruguay. Students are then assigned to a U.N. task force, which must come to a consensus before developing its written recommendation and then giving an oral presentation to a committee of representatives from Xlandia's various factions. The task force then receives a news report warning that a

group of wealthy landowners who control the nation's agricultural resources and most of its export economy are threatening to leave the nation. Students learn that they must deal with the concerns of this movement—i.e., that the landowners maintain a “fair” share of power—in order to be successful in solving the problem. The unit concludes with the task force making the oral presentation and facing challenging questions from Xlandia's representatives. The task force may, if need be, revise its written report before submitting it.

★ Resources

Resources are distributed to students at different points in the problem (see *The Sequence of the Unit* for one example).

**ALL HANDOUTS ARE
LOCATED IN APPENDIX I**

★ Lesson Materials

Because problem based learning is grounded in constructivist learning, several “teachable moments” will arise when students readily see a need to know particular concepts. During these moments teachers can use several techniques to teach concepts. For this purpose, lesson materials are included so traditional lectures can be used to provide information on more difficult subject matter. Alternatively, a Socratic method could be used in which the teacher uses questioning strategies to guide students toward knowledge and understanding.

This unit includes information on the following areas for potential mini-lectures:

- Definitions of terms such as democracy, republic, constitutional democracy
- Comparison of confederal, federal, and unitary systems
- Limited government: shared powers, separation of powers
- Unlimited government: authoritarian and totalitarian systems
- Types of governments around the world
- Parliamentary systems
- Political parties and voting systems
- Societal conditions that build and sustain democracies
- How minority groups are protected in a democracy

LESSON MATERIALS ARE LOCATED IN APPENDIX II

Resources Include:

- Entry document — memo from Pedro Urbino, U.N. Secretary-General
- Profile of Xlandia
- Memo from U.N. Liaison Reedi Chohari regarding next steps
- Profiles of each of the seven potential task force nations (optional)
- Chart of “Comparison of Features of Democracies”
- Worksheet for “Preliminary Recommendations to Allied Rebellion Forces of Xlandia”
- Memo from Reedi Chohari giving guidelines for written and oral reports to Xlandia
- Transcript of radio news report
- Web sites for research
- Classroom textbook and other materials that may be selected by the teacher



★ The Sequence of the Unit

Because problem based learning depends to a great extent on how a particular group of students goes about the task of constructing knowledge from real-world applications, the sequence of learning will differ in each class. As a result, it is virtually impossible to describe the exact unfolding of this problem, even though it has been tested on several occasions. What follows is an example of the sequence of the problem during one class. We have used this particular sequence in our *Procedure* section. The highlighted phrases are cross-referenced as in the sample at right.



**cross-
referencing
box**

- Discuss the memo from the U.N. Secretary-General with the whole class
- Develop the initial problem statement with the whole class
- Develop the initial know and need to know lists with the whole class
- Review the profile of Xlandia and discuss key information
- Have students write first problem log entry
- Assign students to represent nations to be included on the U.N. task force
- Read the second memo from Reedi Chohari assigning students the task of researching and completing the chart, "Comparison of Features of Democracies"
- Revise know/need to know lists
- Undertake a mini-lecture on democratic government
- *Optional:* Distribute profiles of each of the seven nations to their respective representatives
- Have the same-nation groups meet to share key information
- Have students make second problem log entry
- Form U.N. task force groups
- Have task forces complete the chart, "Comparison of Features of Democracies"
- Review third memo from Reedi Chohari outlining final tasks
- Revise know/need to know lists and problem statement
- Undertake mini-lectures on limited vs. unlimited government, basic purposes of a constitution, and the conditions that help build and sustain democracy
- Have task forces meet to discuss preliminary recommendations using the worksheet, "Preliminary Recommendations to Allied Rebellion Forces of Xlandia"
- Review the transcript of the radio news report with the whole class
- Revise know/need to know and finalize problem statement
- Have students make third problem log entry
- Have task forces conduct final meetings to develop written and oral reports
- Task forces make oral presentations to committee from Xlandia, whose members ask questions
- Task forces revise and submit final "white paper" of recommendations for Xlandia
- Use assessment tools and rubrics to evaluate oral and written reports
- Wrap-up and debrief the problem with the whole class

★ Procedure



ENTRY POINT

Give students the memo from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This memo informs them that they are members of a special U.N. task force whose mission is to advise the victorious rebels in Xlandia on what form of democratic government should be created for the nation. The country has had a history of colonialism and dictatorship, but Xlandia is strategically important and the United Nations wants to establish a stable democracy. Students are told that the task force is composed of representatives from different countries, each of whom brings a different perspective on democratic forms of government.

SEE ENTRY DOCUMENT, APPENDIX I



FRAMING OF THE PROBLEM

After discussing the entry document with the students, have them draft a tentative problem statement. Students should be prompted to start this process by filling specific information into the general problem statement form:

How can we, as?, do?, so that?

The initial problem statement may be far from the problem statement presented at the beginning of this unit. This is expected. It is hoped that the problem statement will evolve as students gain more insight and knowledge about the problem and its underlying issues. Remember, the problem is intentionally ill-defined so that the students must grapple with issues and concepts. It is this continual struggle that builds knowledge. The initial statement may look something like:

How can we, as members of the U.N. Task Force on Xlandia's Government, *recommend* what kind of government to create so that the nation will become a successful democracy?

Remember, for now it is fine to keep the problem statement ill-defined or off-target. The problem statement will become more refined, or perhaps change entirely, as the unit unfolds.



KNOWLEDGE INVENTORY (KNOW/NEED TO KNOW)

After constructing the problem statement, the first step in answering the question is for students to assess what they know about the problem. This can be done as a class by creating a "What We Know" list on chart paper, an overhead transparency, or a computer projector. Ask students to carefully review the Entry Document and offer items for the list, making sure to *only record what is actually stated in the text, not what might be inferred*.

The next step in the problem-solving process is to coach students to identify information they need to know in order to provide a solution to the problem statement. Again being careful that students pay close attention to all parts of the Entry Document, create a class list of "What We Need to Know." If students are missing a key piece of information about the problem, the content, or their task, ask questions to elicit items for the list. This is important because everything students are taught in the unit must spring from this list. Without a doubt, students will suggest things they need to know that, in reality, they do not need to

know. Now is not the time to filter these questions out of the process. Rather, allow students to see their irrelevance once additional information is discovered.

The knowledge inventory will differ for each class because students are struggling with identifying the knowledge they have and defining the body of knowledge they do not have. An example of the type of items that might appear on the initial know/need to know lists follows. *Remember that every class will produce a different list, and every idea should be put on the board.* Sometimes the seemingly strange ideas that come from a know/need to know discussion result in some of the more creative approaches to the problem's solution.

EXAMPLES OF INITIAL KNOW/NEED TO KNOW

What Do We Know?

- We are members of a U.N. task force, representing different countries
- We have an important mission
- Pedro Urbino is the U.N. Secretary-General
- A country called Xlandia has had a revolution against a dictator
- The Allied Rebellion Forces of Xlandia defeated the dictator
- The world is watching
- The people of Xlandia have suffered
- Xlandia wants advice on what kind of democratic government to have
- The leaders are not experienced with democracy and need basic information
- The United Nations fears anarchy, instability, and threats to international trade
- If we give good advice, we'll be famous
- We'll be getting a profile of Xlandia and more instructions
- Reedi Chohari is our liaison from the secretary-general

What Do We Need to Know?

- What is the United Nations and what is a secretary-general?
- Where is Xlandia, and what is it like (geography, demographics, history, etc.)?
- What do the people of Xlandia want?
- Who are Xlandia's neighbors and what do they want?
- What does the United States want to see happen in Xlandia?
- How long did Xlandia have a dictator?
- Who are the "Allied Rebellion Forces"?
- What help from the rest of the world might be needed or can be given?
- Which countries are on the task force?
- What are the different kinds of constitutional democratic government?
- Why did Xlandia ask for help from the U.N.?
- What do we actually have to do, and how do we start?

TEACHABLE MOMENTS AND DIALOGUES

Problem based learning is most effective with continual dialogue between the teacher (as a coach) and students. When students are left to discover knowledge or problem solutions on their own without teacher coaching or use of problem logs, they may flounder or stray off track. To prevent this, teachers must actively direct students toward the curriculum goals with probing questions in class discussions, by circulating and listening to discussions in group work, and by evaluating the problem log with meaningful, useful comments. Teachers may take advantage of teachable moments by giving mini-lectures using the lesson materials provided with this unit.

The lesson materials provided in Appendix II are meant for teachers to supplement their knowledge of the subject. It is not mandatory to use the lecture material. Much of this material can be used as needed or if questions arise that require a mini-lecture. For example, the first mini-lecture in Appendix II is on the basic definition of democracy, but since it is short it could be combined with the next two mini-lectures on federal vs. unitary systems and separation of powers. See the notes throughout the *Procedures* section on when and how to present lesson material to students.



RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

The first handout students receive is the Profile of Xlandia. Ask students to read this and discuss it as a class. You may wish to revisit the know/need to know lists at this point. Some of the items on the need to know list can be moved to the know list, and some new items can be added to the need to know list.

► **Potential Hurdle:** Students may want to know why this unit uses a fictitious place instead of a real country. One reason is that by using a made-up nation, it can be described in such a way that no particular kind of democratic government obviously appears to be the correct answer. It also makes it easier to focus on comparing the features of democracies rather than on the specific circumstances of a real place which can change within a short period of time and distract from the central content of the unit. (See *Ideas to Try* on page 17 if you are interested in adapting the unit to a real situation in the world today.)

THE PROBLEM LOG

Throughout the problem each student keeps a problem log, which will help the student and teacher follow the construction of knowledge. To ensure that students stay focused on the underlying political issues and understand the content, the log should be checked periodically by the teacher. The log can also serve as an important assessment of how students or groups use problem-solving skills, develop new questions or “need to know” items, manage time and tasks, and work together as a team. Teachers who wish to do this may ask students to keep track of the problem from the beginning by recording in their logs the problem statement and know/need to know lists. Students should note any changes that need to be made as the problem unfolds.



The first content-related problem log entry can be introduced after the class is familiar with the role they are playing in the problem. At this point the students should be asked to write a problem log entry noting which characteristics might be relevant to the problem of establishing the most appropriate and effective government for Xlandia.

► **Potential Question to Ask:** What characteristics of Xlandia are important to keep in mind when advising its leaders about how to establish a democracy?



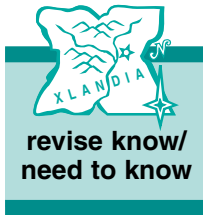
Now assign each student one country to represent as a member of the U.N. task force. If using the materials provided with this unit, you may choose from four to all seven of the following: Australia, Philippines, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Uruguay. If you wish to choose different nations and find your own materials, see the comments in *Ideas to Try* on page 17.

When choosing which nations to include on the task force, first you need to decide how many task force groups (and presentations) you wish to have in your class, and how many students you wish to have in each group. Then, it is recommended that you *always* include:

- The **United Kingdom** since it is the “birthplace” of western democracy and is the classic example of a parliamentary system.
- **Uruguay** since it is similar to Xlandia in some respects, and is an example of a presidential system.
- The **Philippines**, since it recently changed from dictatorship to democracy and is similar to Xlandia in some respects.

When choosing additional nations to include on the task force, here are some ideas to consider:

- **Australia** is an example of a federal system, which should be considered by the task force.
- **South Africa** is also an example of a federal system, and it has recently transitioned to a fully-inclusive democracy.
- **Turkey** is one of the few examples of a democracy in the Islamic world, has a unicameral legislature, and has maintained a secular government despite occasional pressures to become more of a theocracy.
- **Ukraine** is a post-communist nation, formerly a Soviet republic, which still struggles to become fully democratic after transitioning from authoritarian rule. It has a strong president and a unicameral legislature.



Give students the memo from Reedi Chohari, their liaison in the secretary-general's office, which explains how to begin their work. The memo also reminds the members of the task force to consider what is best for Xlandia, given its particular history, culture, and social and economic conditions. Give each student a copy of the chart entitled "Comparison of Features of Democracies."

After the class reads the second memo, have students add information to the know/need to know list. Examples of what might be added include:

What else do we know?

- We need to find out about our country's system of government and share the information at a task force meeting
- We have different ideas about how to organize a government
- We need to fill out a chart to compare features of democracies
- We need to give advice about how to build democracy, based on our nation's experience
- We will get a form for listing our preliminary recommendations to ARFX
- We're supposed to advise Xlandia on what's best for it, not just tell it to copy our system



Mini-lectures on democratic government should be provided at this point. Begin with the basic definition of democracy, including terms like constitutional democracy and republic, then explain how power is distributed and how power is limited in democracies. You may also wish to provide a contrast by explaining the features of systems with *unlimited* government. Finally, inform students about the types of governments that currently exist around the world and go into detail about parliamentary systems. Use the information in Appendix II, sections A-G, as a guide for mini-lectures, which may be given in various lengths and ways according to your own judgment.



You may give students the task of researching their nation as an individual assignment, or divide students into small groups of representatives of the same country. If they work as a group, students may divide up the task, with one member studying their nation's executive branch, another the legislative, and so on. If you and/or the students decide that all of the research will be done individually, ask them to meet and compare notes with other representatives of their nation. This helps to assure accuracy of information when these

groups are later “jigsawed” to form the U.N. task force groups. Each student should complete his or her nation’s column of the chart and be ready to discuss the nation’s government. Remind students to also note any advice they might give Xlandia about how to create and sustain a democracy.



Profiles of each nation’s political structures have been provided in Appendix III. If you need to save time in the unit, these profiles may be copied and given to students as a resource. If students research this information on their own, the profiles can be used by the teacher as a reference or “answer key.” A list of web sites for research is also provided in Appendix III. The same-nation groups, at their final meeting before being jigsawed, should discuss the pros and cons of their form of government and whether they would recommend certain features of it for Xlandia.



The problem log should be used to have students reflect on what they have learned about the system of government in the nation they represent, and what features of their democracy they might recommend for Xlandia.

► **Potential Questions to Ask:** What are the strongest or most noteworthy democratic features of the system of government in the nation you represent? What features do you think would be good for Xlandia and why? Does your nation have any “lessons learned” about creating and keeping a democracy that you should pass along to Xlandia?



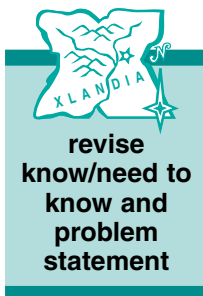
Place students in U.N. task force groups, with one representative from each nation you have chosen. Each student should bring notes on his or her nation’s experience with democracy, along with the completed portion of the “Comparison of Features of Democracies” chart.



The task force members should begin discussing their research on each nation’s system of government and fill in all columns of the chart (an answer key is provided for the teacher in Appendix III). Coach students to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each system as they share information about the government of their country.



When the task forces have completed their charts, or nearly have, give students the third memo, from Reedi Chohari. This memo explains how to do the written “white paper” and oral presentation. Discuss how the memo clarifies the students’ task by asking them to include in their recommendation a brief review of the purpose of a constitution and the concepts of limited and unlimited government. The task force is also asked to conclude with some comments about the societal conditions that sustain democracy.



At this time the know/need to know lists should be revised, and the problem statement revisited. Remember, you want to eliminate as much of the original need to know list as possible as the problem develops. Examples of what might be added to the lists at this point include:

What else do we know?

- We have to write a short “white paper” with our recommendations
- The paper should include the three parts listed in the memo
- In our oral presentation we will be questioned by and will need to address the concerns of each of the ARFX Committee members
- We can use visual aids
- The four ARFX Committee members have different views about what kind of government to create

What else do we need to know?

- What's a "white paper" and how do we write it?
- What is the function of a constitution? What is limited vs. unlimited government?
- What conditions in a nation help make democracy work?
- How much time will Xlandia need to develop its government?
- Can we suggest steps to take so it's not "rushing democracy"?
- Can Xlandia get help from other nations?



A mini-lecture will be needed at this point to discuss the societal conditions necessary for democratic government to succeed. Use the information in Appendix II, Section G, as a guide. Point out that Xlandia has a few of these conditions to build upon but not others. For example, to some degree it does have a middle class, an education system, and potential for economic growth. Other conditions will need to be strengthened, such as an understanding of democratic principles, political consensus, free press, and a professional military.



After completing the "Comparison of Features of Democracies" chart, the task force members meet to discuss how to advise Xlandia and begin making plans for their presentation. Distribute copies of the worksheet, "Preliminary Recommendations to Allied Rebellion Forces of Xlandia," found in Appendix I. Remind students that as members of the task force, they should try to choose the features of government they think will work best for Xlandia, even though they are representing one particular nation.

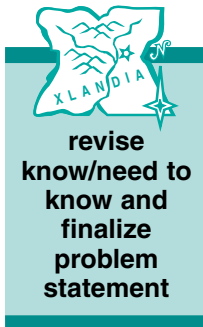
► **Potential Hurdle:** Students may tend to recommend what they know best — i.e., the U.S. system of government. Coach them to see that Xlandia differs in key respects from the United States. For instance, Xlandia is geographically smaller, and does not have such distinct "states" with long histories of relative independence from the national government. This might argue for a unitary or centralist system, since a federalist system is unnecessary. Moreover, be sure students consider the drawbacks of the U.S. system and the potential benefits of parliamentary systems. In a parliamentary system the government can get things done relatively quickly, since the executive leads the political party that controls the legislature. Especially in a new democracy like Xlandia, such efficiency could be important in tackling challenges and maintaining the public's confidence in the power of government to improve society. Challenge students to think about the potential advantages to Xlandia if it establishes, for example, a unicameral legislature, compulsory voting, or a longer term of office for the chief executive. Finally, because the nation has just had a revolution and now has various groups that are demanding a share of power and are fearful of a return to authoritarian rule, students could consider schemes for proportional or guaranteed representation of groups (which is not a feature of the U.S. system).



The last document students receive is a transcript of a radio report describing a threat from the agricultural elites to leave the country, taking their substantial wealth with them and leaving Xlandia's agricultural export economy in chaos. They are demanding a guarantee that they will maintain some share of power in the new government, which they had under the Sonto dictatorship because he came from their ranks.

This turn of events requires the task force to look more closely at how to structure the government in ways that might satisfy the elite's concerns. Coach students to examine such features as the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, or to consider other methods for selecting representatives that do not involve direct voting by the people (as the U.S. Senate was first designed) such as having regional leaders, the president, prime minister, or head of state appoint some members of a legislature. Some nations have also organized their legislature so that each major group of citizens is

guaranteed some representation. Point out to students that in addition to protecting civil rights such as speech, religion, and due process of law, many constitutions include strong language protecting property rights (which helps reassure elites during transitions to democracy). Moreover, remind students that a balance of power among branches of government also works to protect minority groups, since their interests can be protected by an independent judiciary or an executive who can counter a majority in the legislature. See Appendix II, Section H, for more information on how James Madison, in *The Federalist Papers*, argues that the power of a “faction” is controlled in a republic.



At this point the know/need to know lists should be revisited for the final time, and the problem statement revised if necessary. The final problem statement might look something like this:

How can we, as members of the U.N. Task Force on Xlandia’s Government, recommend the most appropriate form of constitutional democratic government and provide advice on how to develop it so that Xlandia becomes a stable democratic nation?

► **Potential Hurdle:** Students may dismiss the radio news report of the threat by wealthy landowners and not want to change their recommendations to the task force. Remind them that economic stability is extremely important for a nation attempting to establish a new democratic government, so Xlandia cannot afford to let the landowners carry out their threat. U.N. Liaison Reedi Chohari will be sure to question them about this, since stability is a major concern of the United Nations. See the above information about how to coach students to consider ways to address this issue.



The problem log should be used to capture students’ thinking about how to address the issue of representation and protection of special groups within a democracy.



► **Potential Questions to Ask:** Should specific groups in a nation be given any “special” status in the government? Or should “majority rule” be the guideline for voting, representation, etc.? Why or why not?

Task force groups should continue to develop their final recommendation to present to ARFX.

► **Potential Hurdle:** Remind students that whatever system of government they recommend for Xlandia, it must reflect the history and culture of the country. Systems that work best are those that arise from the experience and philosophy of the people. In many instances this may require slow, rather than immediate, transitions from authoritarian governments to democracies. It may also require compromises and gradual withdrawal from non-democratic institutions — as was the case, for instance, in Mexico. After its independence movement in the 1800s, Mexico went through a series of dictators and attempts at democracy. During this period the Catholic Church, a strong political and economic player during the colonial period, fought to maintain its connections to power. Finally, in the early part of the 20th century, Mexico endured an 11-year revolution that led to the creation of a constitutional government. Mexico’s constitution called for a separation of church and state, and limited the political and economic power of the Church. This experience is decidedly Mexican, and the transition from a politically active Church to a secular state illustrates the “organic” nature of a nation’s experience with democracy. Countries must seek what is appropriate for them and in their own time. Students may wish to recommend certain “interim steps” for Xlandia to take before instituting all the features of democratic government it ultimately needs.



EXIT FROM THE PROBLEM

Each student group, as the U.N. task force, makes a 6-8 minute presentation to the ARFX Committee and then answers questions for 4-5 minutes. Remind groups that they may use visual aids if they wish (or you may choose to require this).

The ARFX Committee members should ask questions that reveal the students' knowledge and understanding of key terms, concepts, and issues. The roles of committee members could be played by students, teachers or guests from the community. The teacher might want to play Reedi Chohari of the United Nations, who moderates and would be able to ask questions about any topic not covered by the others. See the documents, "Possible Questions from ARFX Committee Members Hearing Oral Presentations" and "Additional Content-Related Questions" in Appendix III.



After their oral presentation, students should review the questions and concerns they received from the ARFX Committee members and consider any revisions to their recommendations for Xlandia. The task forces then submit their written recommendations in the form of a "white paper," following the guidelines given earlier by the U.N. liaison.



Use the rubrics and other assessment tools found in Appendix III to assess the "white papers" and oral presentations. These tools may also be used to guide students in meeting the expectations for the assignment.

When assessing students, remember that problem based learning is most effective when the students are placed in realistic situations. As a consequence, if students begin to alter the authenticity of the situation, the learning environment can easily be reduced to fun and games. This negates much of the validity of the technique and the knowledge gained from the unit. To prevent this digression, it should be stressed that responses must be accurate and reflect knowledge gathered from available resources. In other words, students cannot fabricate data and scenarios. They cannot give bogus answers to questions posed in the problem.

Students also must be coached to see that "I don't know" is a legitimate answer to a question. This makes the classroom authentic. When presented with a problem outside the classroom, there often may be more information available, but limited time to seek out resources. This is one of the lessons that problem based learning teaches. To enable students to gain this insight, they must learn to say they do not have the data to give an accurate answer to some questions that may arise in the unit. In other words, there are a limited number of answers because information is limited. *Students cannot make up answers. They must use the information that is provided.*



WRAP-UP AND DEBRIEFING

It is critical that the wrap-up and debriefing section of the unit not be ignored. This is the part of the unit in which students, as a class, are given feedback on both process and content. *It is imperative that incorrect knowledge or statements be corrected at this point in the problem.* How the debriefing is conducted is less important than the fact that it is conducted.

Process Debriefing

It is important that students have a chance to discuss how they undertook the problem-solving process, and how they felt about the process. This could be done with a series of questions. For example:

- How do you think you did?
- Is there anything you think you left out during your presentation?
- Is it difficult when there is not one right answer to the problem?
- How well did your team work together?

Content Debriefing

The debriefing is an opportunity to clarify misunderstandings students may have shown in their written and oral work in the unit, and to answer any questions they might have. Students should recognize how other forms of constitutional democratic government besides their own can function quite well, and that their own system is not perfect. Moreover, they should see that a country's past history, culture, economy, and even geography affect its decisions about how to govern itself. Students should also have a clearer view of the difficulty of fashioning a government that all members of a society perceive to be fair. Questions might include:

- What do you now understand about the government system in the United States as it compares to other democratic nations?
- Are there some advantages to parliamentary systems? Would such a system be better for the United States?
- Do you think it is easy or difficult to establish democracy around the world? Why?

★ Do's and Don'ts

In reading through this problem, changes will inevitably come to mind. In this section, we highlight changes that have worked and changes that have not worked. Please do not try the ideas that have failed, even though the temptation may be great!

Ideas to Try

The extent to which students explore the basic design of a written constitution is up to the teacher. Students could be asked, for example, to write a potential “Preamble” to a constitution and submit it to the leaders of Xlandia for their consideration. This could also be a good way to assess students’ understanding of the basic purpose of constitutions and limited government.

The seven countries chosen for potential inclusion on the U.N. task force in this unit illustrate differing features of democracies and experiences in building democracy. You may select another set of countries that you or the students want to investigate, but be sure they represent a cross-section of experience with varying constitutional democratic systems. Be sure they include important features that you want students to consider, such as compulsory vs. voluntary voting or proportional legislative representation for minorities. You may also use the framework of this unit to examine a current example of a nation attempting to build a democracy, but be aware of how the particular, complex details of a real nation could distract from the focus on key concepts.

This unit could be linked to World History—examining failed democracies over time; studying the conditions that supported the rise of authoritarian regimes; and evaluating the attempts today to bring democratic reforms to the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This can lead to a discussion about the role of nations like the United States, or multi-national organizations like NATO and the United Nations, in engineering democratic transitions. It is important that students recognize the difficulty of creating democracies where they are not developed organically to fit a particular time and place. For example, democracy might be perceived as a “foreign import” by a nation that believes it threatens cultural and religious traditions.

The relationship of government and the economy is also a natural link to this unit, which could be made within courses on U.S. government or economics. Rebuilding a nation’s economy after it has declined under a dictatorship, and the role of the government in that task, is a rich and contemporary problem for students to explore.

Ideas Not to Try

As mentioned before, you may substitute other nations for those selected in this unit for the U.N. task force, but do so carefully.

Some teachers have tried to save time by having students simply act as one task force that is not composed of different nations—skipping the research into specific nations. This obviously would require revising the documents provided. But while this could still result in an engaging, effective problem-solving situation, it diminishes the overall impact. Students would not have the understanding that there are real places in the world where democratic systems differ, where democracy has grown organically out of a nation’s history and culture, and where becoming a democracy after authoritarian rule is still a struggle.

If you decide to save time by skipping the oral presentations, be aware of the purpose they serve: to force students to consider the concerns of various interest groups in Xlandia. They also increase motivation to perform well and learn the material. Additionally, you may have to build in time for feedback and revision of the “white paper” in order to get the same high-quality work the presentation would have demanded.



Appendix I:

Student Handouts



UNITED NATIONS MEMORANDUM

TO: Special United Nations Task Force on Xlandia's Government

FROM: Pedro Urbino, Secretary-General of the United Nations

RE: Your Important Mission

The United Nations has offered its congratulations to the leaders of the Allied Rebellion Forces of Xlandia (ARFX). As you know, the ARFX has recently defeated the dictator who abused his rule over the people of Xlandia for so long. The world now watches with hope for a bright, prosperous and democratic future. ARFX, in its effort to reshape the country's government, has requested help from the U.N. Security Council. You have an extremely urgent and important job—to make a recommendation to ARFX on the kind of constitutional democratic government that will be best for Xlandia.

I have appointed you to this Special U.N. Task Force because you will bring a variety of viewpoints as representatives of different nations from around the world. It is important to keep in mind that one nation cannot simply adopt another's "model" system. All systems have their pros and cons. Xlandia will have to choose the government features that best fit its own geography, history, culture and society—and then move at its own pace. I hope you can communicate these ideas clearly to ARFX.

In addition to making your recommendation, I am asking you to:

- Be aware that the new leaders of the nation will need some very basic information about democratic constitutions, concepts, and terminology
- Be ready to explain how a constitution can limit government, since Xlandia has only known unlimited government power
- Share any advice you have on creating conditions that will build and sustain a democracy—and on avoiding the pitfalls other nations in similar situations have experienced

ARFX needs help right away because various groups in Xlandia are competing for power. If they do not choose the right course, I fear the nation may descend into anarchy—bringing instability and threatening international trade in that part of the world. The people of the nation are hungry for a fair, effective system of government, and they are counting on you. If you are successful in giving them good advice, you will have their eternal gratitude as well as mine.

You will soon be receiving a profile of Xlandia and instructions on how to proceed from Reedi Chohari, whom I have appointed as your liaison from my office.

PROFILE OF XLANDIA

Geography

Area: 145,000 square kilometers (56,000 square miles – approximately the size of Iowa)

Cities: capital – Xlandia City (est. pop. 1.6 million)

Terrain: plains, two small mountain ranges; 68% agricultural

Climate: tropical



People and History

Nationality: Xlandian

Population (2002): 6 million

Ethnic Groups: indigenous tribal descent 55%; mixed native-European descent 45%

Religions: mainly Catholic and other Christian; small urban Hindu and Muslim populations

Education: compulsory to age 16; literacy 75%

Health: infant mortality rate 28/1000; life expectancy males 64 years, females 68 years.

Work Force (2002): agriculture 48%, services 23%, manufacturing 13%, commerce 5%, transportation and communication 4%, construction 3%, other 4%.

Xlandians lived in tribal kingdoms until the coming of European colonists in the 18th century. At that time, sugar cane, fruit, and coffee plantations were established and became the basis of Xlandia's economy. The colonizers carved up the country into several regions based on geographic divisions, with each controlled by its own chiefs. These regions still think of themselves as distinct from the others. The capital city grew on the seacoast to become an important port on shipping trade routes. It is now the nation's major metropolitan area, numbering well over a million people and home to emerging cultural institutions such as parks, museums, theaters, and concert halls. The school system established in the colonial era continues, even in rural areas, giving the nation a relatively high literacy rate. There is a small urban elite in the capital. Many of the children of the elite are sent out of the country for higher education, but face frustration upon their return to a nation that has been unable to live up to its potential while under the rule of a dictator. Like many in the middle class of similar nations, educated citizens in Xlandia are under-employed and find severely limited opportunities for economic advancement. Religion is not a divisive issue, with a majority Catholic population, some native animist practices, and very small (mainly urban) populations of other Christians, Hindus, and Muslims.

Political and Economic Conditions

The post-World War II era brought the end of colonial rule, and the nation was immediately brought under the control of the Sonto family, who came from the wealthy agricultural elite in what began as a relatively benevolent dictatorship. But with the coming to power in the 1970s of the family's second-oldest son Brula (known as 'BB'), social and economic conditions worsened. Newspapers were shut down and radio and television stations became mouthpieces for the dictatorship. Opposition political parties were outlawed, and plans to hold elections were repeatedly delayed. The people, therefore, have little experience with voting and political debate, and are inexperienced with democratic concepts such as the rule of law, fair representation, and protection of individual and minority group rights.

The military at first was supportive of the Sonto dictatorship, but it became disillusioned as the economy declined and human rights abuses by BB's private security forces worsened. Most of the army generals supported one of their own, Aref Pech, as he made plans for and led the overthrow of the dictator, and those who did not support him remained silent. The military now favors the development of a democratic system.

No major ethnic tensions exist. However, among people from rural areas, the urban poor, and those with non-European ancestry, there is a strong sense that they deserve greater political power and economic benefits. Tribal loyalties are still strong in various rural regions, and although they were held together as a nation under the Sonto dictatorship, these regional groups now welcome the chance for greater independence given to them by the successful rebellion.

Agriculture remains the country's main source of employment, wealth, and exports. Profits from the developing textile and furniture manufacturing industries were largely diverted to the ruling family over the past three decades and foreign investment dried up during that time.

Xlandia's neighboring nations historically have kept to themselves. The colonial powers established firm boundaries centuries ago, and there have been no major disputes over land, resources, or regional power. Most neighboring nations are currently struggling to develop or maintain democratic governments but have had military dictatorships in the past. Their economic and demographic profiles resemble Xlandia's in most respects.



UNITED NATIONS MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Special U.N. Task Force on Xlandia's Government
FROM: Reedi Chohari, Office of the U.N. Secretary-General
RE: Next Step—Notes on the Government of the Nation You Represent

Congratulations on being chosen for this important task force. Secretary-General Urbino has asked me to oversee your work, and to represent him at the meetings with the representatives from ARFX where you will present your recommendations.

To begin, please do some research and prepare to discuss your country's system of government. Use the attached form ("Comparison of Features of Democracies") to record and help share information. You will need to discuss this information with your fellow task force members at one of your early meetings. Later, I will send you another form on which to list your preliminary recommendations to ARFX and the reasons for your suggestions. Remember that the leaders of Xlandia will also want to hear any advice you may have—based on your own nation's experience—about how to transition to, build, and sustain a democratic society.

Thank you.

Note: I am aware that you each might have reasons for promoting your own country's form of government. You know your own system best, of course, and you are rightfully proud of being a citizen of a working democracy. However, please try to consider and debate the pros and cons of each system with your fellow task force members so you can arrive at a solution that best fits Xlandia at this particular time in its history.

COMPARISON OF FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY

Write in the name of the nation you represent, and put a ✓ in the column if your nation has the feature listed in the far left column. The United States is completed as an example.

Features of Government		Nation: United States	Nation: Australia	Nation: Philippines	Nation: South Africa	Nation: Turkey	Nation: Ukraine	Nation: United Kingdom	Nation: Uruguay
A. Constitution									
1a. Written constitution		✓							
1b. Unwritten, based upon common law and practice									
2a. Establishes a unitary or centralist system of government									
2b. Establishes a federalist system of government		✓							
3a. Establishes a parliamentary system									
3b. Establishes a presidential system		✓							
4. Protection of individual rights and minority groups assured in the constitution		✓							
5. Civilian government has authority over the military		✓							
B. Executive Power									
1a. President elected by vote of the people, independent from the legislature		✓							
1b. Prime minister and/or president chosen by the legislative branch									
2. Governor-general appointed by the monarch									
3. Leader in the legislative branch is appointed prime minister by the monarch or monarch's representative									
4. Have both a president and a prime minister									
5. Monarch serves as a national figurehead									
6a. Cabinet appointed by the executive with legislative approval		✓							

Features of Government		Nation: United States	Nation: Australia	Nation: Philippines	Nation: South Africa	Nation: Turkey	Nation: Ukraine	Nation: United Kingdom	Nation: Uruguay
B. Executive Power <i>(continued)</i>									
7a. Executive branch's primary role is to carry out the laws		✓							
7b. Executive branch makes and carries out the laws									
C. Legislative Power									
1a. Bicameral system		✓							
1b. Unicameral system									
2a. Legislative body (or bodies) elected by popular vote		✓							
2b. Legislative body (or bodies) hereditary or appointed									
D. Judicial Power									
1a. Supreme Court appointed by executive with legislative approval		✓							
1b. Supreme Court appointed by executive									
1c. Supreme Court appointed by monarch									
2. Supreme Court is independent and has the power of judicial review		✓							
E. Citizen Participation									
1a. Multiple political parties									
2a. Two political parties dominate the party system		✓							
3. Compulsory voting									



UNITED NATIONS MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Special U.N. Task Force on Xlandia's Government

FROM: Reedí Chohari, Office of the U.N. Secretary-General

RE: Preliminary Recommendations, Final White Paper and Presentation

I hope your meetings have gone well. Attached is the form for recording your "Preliminary Recommendations." When you finish that, here is what is needed to complete your work:

A. Write a "white paper"— a short report for ARFX that:

- Reviews the basic function of a constitution in a democracy, and reviews the essential characteristics of limited vs. unlimited government.
- Compares the various features of different systems of democratic government, and makes a recommendation on which features to adopt for Xlandia and why.
- Explains the conditions in a nation that help keep democracy strong. Include any advice you have about how the leaders of Xlandia should start to develop these conditions as they move from an authoritarian past to a democratic future.

B. Present your recommendation orally to the ARFX Committee. They will no doubt have challenging questions, so you will need to be ready to address each of their concerns. Always keep in mind that they are relatively inexperienced with democracy, so they will need very basic information and definitions to guide them. You may use visual aids to help make the presentation clear and compelling.

The following members of the ARFX Committee will hear your presentation:

Aref Pech, leader of the Allied Rebellion Forces. A former army general with many loyal troops, Pech claims to want democracy and admires the U.S. Constitution, but isn't sure the country is ready at this point in time. Aware that the rebellion was fought by a collection of groups who might not be easily united under a strong national government, Pech wonders if a loosely-governed "federation" might be more likely to succeed.

Moran Lofay, a wealthy businessperson and member of the urban elite who helped fund the rebellion. Lofay is fearful of losing power to "the masses," and probably would favor a strong central government or even a "more benevolent" dictator.

Chay Sorom, a peasant leader who contributed many of the ARFX foot soldiers. Sorom wants a democracy but knows that many peasants insist the rich should not be given the chance to gain power again in the new government. Concerned about giving the executive too much power, Sorom even questions the value of a representative government since direct voting by the people seems to be "fairest."

Myself as U.N. liaison. While the nation I come from has a parliamentary system, I am open to other ways of organizing a government, as long as the nation becomes stable and is governed efficiently and fairly for all citizens. I will act as moderator for the committee during the presentation.



U.N. TASK FORCE ON XLANDIA'S GOVERNMENT

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ALLIED REBELLION FORCES OF XLANDIA

Following are our suggestions for each area of a government for Xlandia. Also provided are the reasons for these recommendations, and the task force nations that have a similar feature in their system of government.

Constitution

1. Should it be written or unwritten?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

2. Should it establish a federalist system or a unitary system?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

3. Should it establish a parliamentary system or a presidential system?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

4. How should it protect the rights of minorities and individuals?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

5. What should be the relationship between the military and civilian leadership?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

6. Other features we recommend:

Reasons:

Task force nations that have this feature:

Executive Power

1. Should the chief executive be selected by direct popular vote, appointed by a monarch, or appointed by the legislative branch?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

2. What should the executive's role be? Should one person play that role, or should it be shared by more than one?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

3. Other features we recommend:

Reasons:

Task force nations that have this feature:



Legislative Power

1. Should the legislature be bicameral or unicameral?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

2. Should the members of the legislature be selected by popular vote, by appointment, or in some combination? Should any special guarantees be given for minority group representation?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

3. Other features we recommend:

Reasons:

Task force nations that have this feature:

Judicial Power

1. How should the members of the Supreme Court be selected?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:



2. Should the Supreme Court be independent and have the power of judicial review?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

3. Other features we recommend:

Reasons:

Task force nations that have this feature:

Citizen Participation

1. Though difficult to plan for or write into a constitution, should the political party system ideally be a multiple-party, one-party, or two-party system?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

2. How often should elections be held, and should voting be compulsory or voluntary?

Reason:

Task force nations that have this feature:

3. Other features we recommend:

Reasons:

Task force nations that have this feature:



TO: United Nations Task Force

FROM: Allied Rebellion Forces of Xlandia Headquarters

RE: URGENT: TRANSCRIPT OF RADIO NEWS REPORT

Xlandia City, Wed., Nov. 12, 1:00 PM

A statement was issued today by the group of wealthy landowning families who control Xlandia's agricultural exports. They are demanding a share of power in the new government now being created with the assistance of the United Nations Task force. Under the dictatorship of BB Sonto, who came from among these elites, the landowning families had great influence in the government and economy. They now feel threatened by the rebellion, which was paid for by urban business and industrial interests and fought mainly by the peasants of Xlandia.

Without assurance that they will have strong guarantees of representation in the new constitution, according to spokesperson Lando Genti, "We will abandon this country. We will take our wealth with us, destroy our plantations, and ruin the exports that are so vital to Xlandia's economy. Members of our group will not sit and watch as they lose power by becoming just one more vote in a democracy of millions!"

*Please deal with this in your
recommendation...we can't build a
strong democracy with a ruined
economy!*

-Reedi



Appendix II:

Lesson Materials

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON MATERIALS

The lesson materials provided in this section are to assist the teacher in presenting mini-lectures during the unit, or to use as a reference for designing other kinds of lessons that will provide students with information they need to solve the problem. The mini-lectures may be combined or reorganized to best fit the needs of a particular class.

Following are basic questions about government that are answered by these materials. As the teacher you will need to decide if, when, and exactly how to use this information.

A. What is democracy?

- Definitions of democracy, republic, constitutional democracy

B. How can power be distributed geographically?

- Confederation, federalist, and unitary (centralist) systems

C. How is government power limited?

- Shared powers, separation of powers, checks and balances

D. What is a government like when power is unlimited?

- Characteristics and examples of authoritarian and totalitarian systems

E. What are the types of nations around the world?

- One set of categories, describing nations by their government and economy

F. What is a parliamentary system?

- Characteristics and examples of parliamentary democracies around the world

G. How can citizen participation in a democracy be structured?

- Political Parties and Voting Systems

H. How can a nation build and sustain democracy?

- The importance of a strong middle class, widespread education, understanding of democratic principles, political consensus, a growing economy, support from other nations, a free press, and a professional military under civilian control

I. How are minority groups protected in a democracy?

- James Madison on factions in a republic

A. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Democratic Definitions

In democracies the people (citizens), directly or through their chosen representatives, regularly indicate their political preferences by electing leaders who represent them in governing bodies. In the United States these governing bodies include the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the president and vice president. Through elections the preferences of voters are shown according to which side in the contest receives the majority of votes. This is called “popular government” which, in theory, means the people (citizens) are fundamentally responsible for their own political well-being. In a popular government the majority has the power to elect representatives who do their bidding.

However, the majority cannot do whatever they wish because limitations are put on majority rule in the form of rights given to all citizens. These rights are guaranteed by the constitution.

A government that provides both *rule by majority* and *limitations on the power of the majority via citizens’ rights* is called a **constitutional democracy**. The constitution puts on paper the basic organization and operation of the government and describes its powers and its limitations. Today the terms **democracy**, **republic**, and **representative democracy** are often used interchangeably to refer to a system of government in which ultimate political power rests with the majority through its capacity to choose representatives in free and open elections.

To the writers of the U.S. Constitution, however, “democracy” and “republic” had different meanings. When the Founding Fathers complained about the risks of democracy, they were referring to **pure democracy**, in which the public participates directly in the making of public policy. In their use of the term **republic**, the framers were referring to representative democracy, in which elected officials meet in representative institutions to decide policy through extended debate and deliberation.

B. HOW CAN POWER BE DISTRIBUTED GEOGRAPHICALLY?

Confederation, Federalist, and Unitary (Centralist) Systems

Governments are often structured in ways that require different governmental bodies across a nation to share power. In the case of the United States, power is shared between the state governments and the federal (or central) government. During the framing of the Constitution, there was much debate about how much power should go to the central government and how much power should belong to the states. In determining how they could create a strong enough central government without losing the support of states' rights advocates in the vote to approve the constitution, the Founding Fathers considered three systems.

1. Confederation

The Articles of Confederation — drafted in 1777, ratified in 1781, and replaced by the Constitution in 1789 — are an example of a confederation. They provided for a league of friends among the 13 states, which amounted to a very loose association with little power given to the central government. A confederation for the United States was favored by those who feared a strong central government similar to England. Under the articles:

- The central government was subordinate to the states and acted only through the states
- A federal law could not pass unless it was agreed to by every state
- The federal government could not levy taxes, regulate commerce, pay war debts, coin money, or regulate foreign affairs
- Advantages included a high degree of regional or local power

2. Federalist

This type of system provides for greater regional autonomy and balance between regional interests and national interests. In a federalist system:

- Neither the central government nor the state governments are subordinate and they cannot abolish each other
- The states and central government are independent in some areas
- Both the states and central government have powers over citizens and explicit rights as well as limitations
- Advantages include the ability to govern a large geographic area more effectively by dividing responsibilities among various levels or divisions of government

3. Unitary or Centralist

The Founding Fathers thought of England as a centralist system. It is the most common form of government, especially for small nations that do not have historically distinct regions/divisions with their own governments. In this system:

- All state and local governments are subordinate to the central government
- The central government can disband the states
- States are not sovereign and are not guaranteed a republican form of government by the central government
- Advantages include more efficiency and fewer levels of government

C. HOW IS GOVERNMENT POWER LIMITED?

Features of a System of Limited Government

A system of **limited government** includes:

- Established and respected *restraints* on power
- Legal limits on power expressed in a *constitution*
- Protections for *individual rights*
- A basis for promoting the *common good*

Limiting Government Through Shared Powers and Separation of Powers

Political philosophers of the Enlightenment period, and the founders of the United States, believed that one way to protect the people from possible aristocracy or totalitarian regimes is to create a system of shared power and separation of powers. As the French political philosopher Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755) said, “When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty.”

Republics include a separation of powers and shared powers. The term “separation of powers” can be somewhat misleading. It means that separate branches of the government exist—the legislative, executive, judicial—and that each has separate powers and functions, as in the U.S. However, the powers and functions of the branches overlap and are shared.

Shared powers means the overlapping of powers and functions among the separate branches of government. This overlap requires institutions to cooperate in decision making and gives each branch some influence on the other branches, resulting in a system of checks and balances.

Separation of powers means that each branch of government is equal to and independent of the others. In addition:

- Each branch exercises different components of governmental powers and responsibilities
- Government activities are divided into the making of laws (legislative branch), the implementation or carrying out of laws (executive branch), and trying cases under the laws (judicial branch)
- Each branch is responsible to different constituencies
- Branches have differing lengths of service

Limiting Government Through a System of Checks and Balances

The writers of the U.S. Constitution did not want any branch of government to become too strong, so they created independent powers and checks on powers. We refer to this as a system of **checks and balances**. The system depends upon vague and contradictory language in the Constitution, which creates a never-ending tug of war that does not allow one branch of government to dominate the others and protects the people from tyranny. Any branch exercising power is checked by another branch, thus balancing power between them.

- **Check**—One branch can control or restrict another branch (e.g., the president can veto a law passed by Congress)
- **Balance of power**—each branch depends upon the others to accomplish its objectives but each has a separate job to do (e.g., Congress makes laws while the president carries out laws)
- **Express powers**—each branch has a specific function which limits its power:
 - a) Legislative function is performed by the House and Senate
 - b) Judicial duties are given to the courts
 - c) Executive power is given to the president and vice president

Among the branches, each is separate and distinct, none exercise powers properly belonging to the others, and each has an opportunity to check the power of the others.

D. WHAT IS A GOVERNMENT LIKE WHEN POWER IS UNLIMITED?

Authoritarian and Totalitarian Systems

Unlimited governments are those in which there are no effective means for the people to restrain the power of those in control of the government. In these systems power is concentrated in the hands of a single person or small group of people, and all other people are subordinate to this power. Often called a *dictatorship* or *tyranny*, there are two types of unlimited governments: authoritarian systems and totalitarian systems.

Authoritarian Systems

In all authoritarian systems:

- Political activity is controlled by a single person or a dominant elite
- Power is exercised by political party officials with the support of the military
- The military can often expel civilian rulers and institute a temporary military regime
- Those who rule cannot be held responsible to the will of the people, and the government is not accountable for its actions
- Power groups can also be an association of bureaucrats, religious leaders, or technocrats
- The media is subject to censorship
- Freedom of citizens is restricted
- There is no legal opposition to the elite
- The public is not allowed to criticize the government
- Representative institutions either do not exist or are a formality

In some cases, authoritarian systems have:

- Competitive economic systems, with some private ownership of industry and agriculture
- Some cultural freedom and freedom of movement
- Support from at least part of the population
- Some general social or economic reform
- Evolved into democracies

Examples of authoritarian systems in history are Iraq under Hussein, Argentina under Peron, Mexico under Diaz, Spain under Franco, and Zimbabwe under Mugabe.

Totalitarian Systems

In a totalitarian system, which is an extreme, modern form of an authoritarian system:

- Power is based upon a dominant leader supported by a mass party
- Party actions are based upon an ideology
- No opposition parties are allowed
- The ruling group controls communication and the media—and controls *through* communication and the media
- Terror is used as a way of controlling people, generally through a secret police
- Planning (economic, social, and political) is highly centralized

- Religion is controlled, although historic totalitarian groups were fundamentally not religious
- The state attempts to control individual behavior, unlike authoritarian systems
- All organizations and individuals are subordinated under the ruling group
- The state attempts to control the whole society—including minds, bodies, actions, and thoughts—in order to mobilize the population
- The economy is controlled, but private enterprise is generally allowed
- The system does not evolve into a democracy, and tends to die with its singular leader

Examples of totalitarian systems in history are Germany under the Nazis, Italy under Mussolini, the Soviet Union under Stalin, and the People's Republic of China under Mao Zedong (and subsequent rulers up to the present).

E. WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD?

Categorizing Countries

Political scientists put countries into categories according to the types of governments and economies they have. There are many different systems for categorizing countries, with no set agreement as to which is the most accurate. However, the following system—described by John McCormick in *Comparative Politics in Transition*—is a reliable and straightforward method for grouping modern nations.

Liberal democracies include about 30 countries in the world, mostly in Western Europe and North America. Examples are the United States, Great Britain and its Commonwealth, and Japan.

Features include:

- Consistent, predictable political institutions
- Institutionalized forms of political participation
- Representative governments
- Rule of law
- Provisions for civil liberties and citizens' rights
- Predominately free-market economies
- Mostly wealthy nations
- Urbanized
- High quality of life including education, health care, and social services

Newly industrializing countries include about 33 nations mostly in Southeast and South Asia, and Latin America. Examples are Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, India, Philippines, South Africa, and Turkey.

Features include:

- An improving record of political stability
- Emerging democratic traditions
- Rapid economic growth
- Predominately free-market economies
- Economy shifting from agriculture to industry
- Diversified goods for export
- Growing investment in the national infrastructure, including health care, education, and social services

Less developed countries include about 36 nations mostly in Latin America, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa. Examples are Bolivia, Jamaica, El Salvador, Kenya, Nigeria, and Samoa.

Features include:

- The potential to build legitimate and stable political structures
- Immediate problems that prevent long-term building of a stable political structure
- Weak or unstable political institutions

- Low level of political participation
- Weak national identity
- Top-heavy or inefficient bureaucracies
- Predominately agricultural economy
- A small range of products for export
- High unemployment
- Poorly developed social services and poor public education system

Communist and post-communist countries include about 34 nations in Asia and Eastern Europe. Examples of currently communist countries are Cambodia, China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam. Examples of post-communist countries are Russia and other former members of the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe.

Features include:

- At some point have had communism as a constitutional goal
- Have experienced various forms of socialism
- Post-communist nations are transitioning to free-market democracy

Islamic countries include 26 nations in the Middle East and North Africa, and Indonesia. Examples are Egypt, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan.

Features include:

- Historically authoritarian or not fully democratic
- Majority of the population is Muslim
- Religion is a political force in the country
- Religion impacts law, culture, and economics

Marginal states include 34 nations, mostly from sub-Saharan Africa. Examples are Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and Zambia.

Features include:

- Poorest countries in the world or least developed
- Political instability and persistent military interference in the government
- Occasions of total political breakdown and genocide
- Social or tribal divisions leading to extended civil war, and/or religious strife and fundamentalist movements
- Poor human rights record
- Little political competition
- Primarily an agricultural work force and few exports
- Heavy dependence on foreign aid
- Serious public health problems, including high rate of HIV
- Minimal infrastructure, including health care, communication, transportation, and education

F. WHAT IS A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM?

Parliamentary Democracies Around the World

Parliamentary democracies, in contrast to presidential democracies, do not share power between the executive and legislative branches of government.

Features of parliamentary systems:

- Voters elect the legislature (parliament)
- The legislature elects the executive (usually called a prime minister)
- The executive is usually the leader of the majority party in the legislature, if a single party dominates the legislative branch; otherwise, the executive is chosen by a coalition of parties within the legislature
- The executive chooses a cabinet generally of the majority party leaders
- The executive and cabinet are responsible for drafting laws that are then voted on by the legislature
- The executive maintains his or her position unless unseated through an election by the legislature

Parliamentary systems are characterized by:

- Minimal conflict between the executive and the legislature, especially if there is a dominant party
- Less effective minority (views and wishes of the minority are often ignored due to the lack of inroads into power controlled by the majority party)
- Efficiency (parliamentary systems can accomplish more, and do so quickly, compared to presidential systems where the legislature may be dominated by an opposition party)
- Multiple parties (many parliamentary systems have several political parties rather than two major parties)
- Seats in the legislature are fragmented among several parties, none of which can claim a majority
- Multiple-party coalitions (smaller parties will often attempt to form a bloc to unseat the executive or stall legislation)
- When there is no clear majority, a coalition of political parties in the legislature is required to elect an executive
- Coalition governments are notoriously unstable since the executive can only rule as long as he or she retains the support of all members of the coalition (Japan is currently suffering through a series of unstable coalitions, and India did so in the 1980s and 1990s)

Countries with parliamentary systems:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| ■ United Kingdom (Great Britain) | ■ Germany |
| ■ France | ■ Russia |
| ■ Japan | ■ South Africa |
| ■ India | ■ Egypt |

G. HOW CAN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN A DEMOCRACY BE STRUCTURED?

Political Parties and Voting Systems

Political parties are formed to elect candidates to government office and represent the views of citizens who either belong to or agree with the party. A constitution in a democracy does not prescribe the number of political parties that may exist in a nation. Indeed, political parties were frowned upon by the framers of the United States Constitution, who feared they could divide the nation and undermine independent thinking among voters. However, it is possible to influence the development of parties by designing the election system in either of two ways:

Proportional Representation. In some countries political parties receive legislative seats (such as seats in the House of Commons in the United Kingdom) corresponding to the party's proportion of the vote. As an example, if the Labor party receives 30% of the vote, they will receive 30% of the seats in the House of Commons. Proportional representation means that small parties can be represented in the legislative branch. As a result, countries that have systems of proportional representation tend to have many parties and they are able to represent a wide variety of political perspectives among the people. The down side to proportional representation is that the legislative branch is often fractionalized or splintered, making it difficult to reach compromises on legislation. Alliances must be formed among the many parties in order to get work done. This sometimes means that a strong leader as prime minister can take power away from a divided legislative body that is unable to reach decisions.

Winner-Take-All. The United States has a winner-take-all system whereby whichever party wins one over half of the vote takes the seat. This system discourages small parties as they rarely win elections and are rarely able to elect representatives to the legislative branch. As a result, winner-take-all systems tend to create two party systems and these two parties include a wide variety of political opinions among the membership. As an example, today's Republicans include economic conservatives who may be urban, social moderates along with rural Christian conservatives. These groups may not have much in common but they find a home in a party that claims to look out for their interests. The down side to the winner-take-all system is that splinter groups are often alienated from the two parties and are unable to have a voice in the legislative branch. There are instances in the past where groups, such as the anti-slavery northerners, eventually assembled a critical mass and were able to create a party (the Republicans) that became a primary party. However, many such splinter groups, such as the Libertarians, languish through decades of elections without having much impact on elections. These parties sometimes play the role of spoiler by siphoning off votes from one side and throwing the election to the other, such as the case with Ralph Nader and the Green Party in the 2000 presidential election.

Compulsory vs. Voluntary Voting. In addition to joining and supporting political parties, the most prominent way that citizens participate in a democracy is by voting in elections. Since voting is considered a fundamental responsibility in a democracy, some nations have written into their constitutions the requirement that all adult citizens *must* vote or be subject to fines and other penalties. There are pro and con views of this practice. In nations such as Australia, where voting was made compulsory in 1924, lawmakers were attempting to counter voter apathy—to increase the percentage of citizens who vote. Other democracies sometimes face this problem. For example, in the United States voter turnout has been declining in recent decades; currently only about 50% of those citizens who are qualified to vote actually do vote in presidential elections. Critics of compulsory voting argue that such laws undermine fundamental democratic ideals of freedom and individual choice. When voting is legally required, some voters do not take it seriously and just mark

their ballot without paying close attention to candidates and issues. These critics also point out that in most democracies with voluntary voting, turnout is between 70% and 90%. Furthermore, studies have shown that when voting is compulsory the outcome of an election is the same as it would have been with voluntary voting. Finally, opponents of compulsory voting see it mainly as a tool of major political parties who only want to increase the number of votes for their own candidates. Rather than *persuade* people to vote by earning support for their policies and candidates, these critics believe, political parties have found it easier to simply pass laws that force people to vote.

H. HOW CAN A NATION BUILD AND SUSTAIN DEMOCRACY?

Conditions That Sustain Democracies

Generally, certain conditions must exist in a nation in order for democratic government to become firmly established and survive over time. Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, the United States and the democratic nations of Europe attempted to “export democracy.” They believed that if all nations operated under democratic principles, the world would be open to trade and relatively free of wars. Attempts at exporting democracy often involved ridding the country of a dictator, helping a perceived elite write a constitution (often patterned after the United States), and holding elections. Unfortunately, democracy is not quite so easy to export. A truly functional democracy requires certain social and economic conditions. Among them are:

1) A strong middle class

A middle class provides a large pool of people who pay taxes and want a say in how the government is run. This gives the democracy a strong base of support and a group of people who will serve as leaders, both at the local and national levels.

2) A relatively classless education system

To sustain a democracy a nation needs political participants and discerning citizens who are able to make sound political decisions. These decisions cannot be made solely by an elite or an elite working with the middle class. The generally large working class and the poor must also have access to opportunity and the ability to affect the political system. This is achieved through education. Moreover, if all people are literate, they are better able to develop an understanding of political issues, make informed judgments about candidates for elective office, and participate in political discourse in the “marketplace of ideas.”

3) An understanding of democratic principles

An important contribution education makes to a nation is to teach democratic principles to the young. This gives the nation a strong base of support for its institutions as well as a pool of participants and potential leaders. It should also be noted that Western Democracies sprang from the Europe’s Enlightenment period, when belief in the value of science, secularism, and modernity accompanied the development of democratic principles. These principles may not be easily understood in a nation that does not share the history of the Enlightenment.

4) A political consensus

Nations torn by years of dictatorships or internecine wars among tribes, ethnic groups, or religious groups have a difficult time sustaining a democracy. In order to create and sustain a democracy, the majority of people need to believe in democratic principles and must see the establishment of a democracy as a positive force that will help them in the long run. Democracies cannot be forced upon an unwilling people because the system requires the participation and commitment of the people in order to survive.

5) A growing economy

Poverty and stagnation do not foster democracy—in fact, these conditions tend to foster authoritarian systems of government like fascism. Democracy is inefficient and expensive because it requires group decision-making, lobbying, and campaigning. As a result, democracy tends to work best in economies that can support it. In addition, under democratic governments the people expect the government to support and grow the economy. This is one of the major expectations people have of a democracy—access to economic opportunity. Authoritarian

systems generally have an elite that is unwilling to share the nation's wealth. To foster democracy the elite must be committed to diversifying the economy, providing economic opportunity for the middle, working, and lower classes, and sharing the wealth.

6) Support from other nations

Democracies in their infancy can be fragile and unstable. Many new democracies in their beginning stages stumble and become authoritarian systems, military or civilian dictatorships, or revert to monarchies. This often can be prevented if neighboring countries or trading partners offer their support for the new democracy by way of loans, trading preferences, education and health services, or building roads and communication systems. Support can be as direct as sending United Nations advisors during elections. It can be as indirect as symbolic visits from popular presidents of major nations who show a kinship with an elected government.

7) A free press

Democracy requires a free press that is allowed to report information about what the government is doing. In a democracy citizens are responsible for participating in their government's decisions and are expected to vote for political leaders. In order to participate wisely, citizens must have information and the opportunity to critique the work of the government and politicians. A free press also helps to limit government corruption. Finally, a free press in its finest form seeks the truth and shares with citizens new arguments and ideas.

8) A professional military

A democracy is expected to have a professional military that serves the people and is controlled by the civilian elite—the chief executive and the legislature. A professional military does not participate in politics, and its leaders do not hold political office or control legislative or executive functions. As a result, the military is not used as a repressive force against its own citizens.

I. HOW ARE MINORITY GROUPS PROTECTED IN A DEMOCRACY?

James Madison on “Factions” in a Republic

A Bill of Rights or similar feature of a constitution, watched over by an independent judiciary, helps guarantee that the civil rights of an individual or minority group will be protected from excessive government power. In some democracies, especially those with parliamentary systems, minority groups form political parties to elect representatives who are given a percentage of seats in the legislature in proportion to the number of votes received.

A minority group may also be assured that it will not be oppressed by a “tyranny of the majority” if a nation becomes a republic. James Madison, co-author of the Federalist Papers, writing in 1787 to persuade the United States to adopt the new constitution, discusses the nature and danger of “factions” in a democracy. In Federalist No. 10, he states:

“Complaints are everywhere heard...that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority. ...When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government... enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens.

“By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

“The latent causes of factions are thus sown into the nature of man...But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society.”

To guard against this danger, Madison argued that a republic, unlike a direct democracy, inherently restrains a majority of the population from oppressing a minority:

“A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place... promises the cure for which we are seeking. The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended. The effect of the first difference is...to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country...Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens...”

Madison is saying, then, that a minority group need not excessively fear that its voice will be lost in a democratic system. The representatives sent to a legislature by the people will, he trusts, act more like statesmen with “enlightened views and virtuous sentiments,” and there will be fewer “men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs...” In other words, members of the legislature will be able to rise above what one group in society may want and decide what is best for the nation as a whole. And the larger the nation, the more unlikely it is that any single faction can gain a majority. The extent to which this vision remains true in the United States today is open to debate.

In Federalist No. 51, Madison further discusses the possibility that one branch of the government might gain too much power over the others. (In Xlandia, for example, the wealthy agricultural elites fear that a legislature controlled by the majority of the population might act against their interests, and would be unstoppable by the executive or judicial branches.) Madison explains how a government can be designed to prevent it from becoming controlled by one group that oppresses other groups:

“But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists of giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others... Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”

Here, in effect, Madison is saying that conflict between self-interested groups is essential in a democracy. By struggling over power within a constitutional framework, factions will “check and balance” each other, thus protecting the interests of ALL citizens.



Appendix III:

Assessment Tools and Other Resources

- Profiles of Seven U.N. Task Force Nations
- Internet Resources for Researching Nations and Governments
- ARFX Committee Questions
- Teacher's Answer Key to Chart
- Rubrics for White Paper and Oral Presentation

OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN NATIONS ON THE U.N. TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF XLANDIA'S GOVERNMENT

Australia

- A large nation with a federal system of provincial governments like the United States, but with a multi-party parliamentary system.
- As a former British colony and current member of the Commonwealth, Australia acknowledges the Queen of England as sovereign but she is without real power.

Philippines

- The Philippines emerged from the long-time Marcos dictatorship in the 1980s to become one of the few examples of a democracy in Asia. Of the U.N. Task Force nations, it is the most representative of the “developing world” of which Xlandia is a part.
- A multi-party, unitary, presidential system modeled after the U.S. government.

South Africa

- A medium-sized republic with a federal system, South Africa has only recently become a true democracy for all its citizens following the end of the Apartheid Era in the early 1990s.
- A multi-party system with a bicameral parliament and president elected by one house, the National Assembly.

Turkey

- The first true democracy in the Middle East, Turkey successfully transitioned in 1923 from an Islamic theocracy under the Ottoman Empire to a parliamentary republic.
- A unitary system with a unicameral legislature and multiple political parties.
- Interestingly, the military has played a stabilizing role in ensuring the continuation of a secular democracy.

Ukraine

- A new democracy, formerly under communist rule as part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine is still struggling with election reform and the development of democratic institutions like a free press.
- A multi-party, unitary, parliamentary system with a strong president.

United Kingdom

- Also known as Great Britain, it is made up of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- England was the “original” model of a democratic parliamentary system in a modern nation-state. It has influenced other European nations, the United States, the other former members of its empire, and most democracies in the world today.
- The UK is a leading example of a constitutional monarchy. It has the unique feature of an unwritten constitution based on common law and practice developed over many centuries.

Uruguay

- A former Spanish colony, Uruguay is one of South America's oldest democracies — founded in 1830.
- A unitary, multi-party, presidential system.
- In a cautionary tale that might benefit Xlandia, the military established a regime in Uruguay from 1973 to 1984 after a period of economic and political unrest and a brief Marxist rebellion. The country's democratic tradition was upheld after a new constitution was adopted and civilian government was restored in 1985.

PROFILE OF AUSTRALIA

Geography

Area: 7.7 million square kilometers (3 million square miles – about the size of the 48 continental United States)

Cities: capital – Canberra; other major cities – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth

Terrain: varied, generally low-lying; vast central deserts

Climate: relatively dry; temperate in the south, tropical in the north

People

Population (2000): 19.1 million

Ethnic Groups: European 92%, Asian 7%, Aboriginal 1%

Language: English

Religions: Anglican 22%, Roman Catholic 27%, other Christian 22%, other non-Christian 11%, no religion 17%

Education: compulsory to age 15; literacy 99%

Health: infant mortality rate 6/1000; life expectancy males 75 years, females 81 years

Work Force (1999): agriculture 5%; mining, manufacturing, and utilities 22%; services 69%; public administration and defense 4%

Features of System of Government

Type: democratic, parliamentary, federal-state system

Constitution

- Government based on written constitution of 1900; based partly on the U.S. constitution and on the British system
- Federalist system; six states, each with its own government and parliament
- Individual rights and protection for minority groups are not written into the constitution but are a feature of Australia's government by common law and practice, as in Great Britain
- As a former British colony and a continuing member of the Commonwealth, Australia recognizes the Queen of England as head of state, although this is just a figurehead role and all real power lies with the parliament.
- Military may only be deployed if both houses of the legislature authorize such action and the governor-general (chief executive) signs the authorization

Executive Power

- A governor-general is selected by the political party in power (with a majority in Parliament) and is appointed by the queen to a five-year term
- The role of the governor-general is to aid Parliament in carrying out laws
- The governor-general acts as commander-in-chief of the military
- A prime minister is chosen by the party, or a coalition of parties, with the majority in the House of Representatives
- The prime minister appoints a cabinet of ministers, and together they (more than the governor-general, *see above*) wield actual power for creating and carrying out policy

Legislative Power

- Bicameral parliamentary system
- The House of Representatives is made up of 150 members who are directly elected by popular vote in districts based on population; three-year terms; control over spending and taxation
- The Senate has 76 members who are directly elected by popular vote in each state to six-year terms

Judicial Power

- Judges on the High Court of Australia are appointed by the governor-general to lifelong terms
- Independent judiciary, with the power of constitutional review

Citizen Participation

- Recently dominated by two political parties—the moderate to conservative Liberal Party-National Party coalition and the more left-wing opposition Australian Labor Party
- Voting is compulsory and universal at the age of 18 for national elections
- General elections are held every three years

Strengths and Weaknesses of Australia's System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of parliamentary systems, multi-party systems, and federalist systems.
- The governor-general works closely with the prime minister. This partnership between the executive and legislature allows for relatively quick implementation of policies.
- Since members of the House of Representatives are not elected from across the nation by local districts, power in the legislature can become concentrated among politicians from a particular interest group or populous region.
- Compulsory voting forces people who may not wish to vote to do so, creating resentment and apathy.

Political History Notes

Australia's original inhabitants, a hunting-gathering people known as the Aborigines, arrived in the continent-nation about 40,000 years ago. In 1770 the British Empire laid claim to Australia. Six colonies were established, which later became the provinces that in many ways resemble the states of the United States of America. Australia became a member of the British Commonwealth and opened the first federal parliament in 1901. It became an independent nation in 1942, when a federalist system was created, with the six provinces each electing their own parliaments and headed by a premier. Australia is still formally a member of the Commonwealth and recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as a head of state. In reality, the British royalty's title is just a formality and all real power lies with the legislature, as in other parliamentary systems.

PROFILE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Geography

Area: 300,000 square kilometers (117,187 square miles – slightly larger than Arizona)

Cities: capital – Manila (pop. 9.9 million)

Terrain: islands; 65% mountainous; narrow coastal lowlands

Climate: tropical

People

Population (2000): 76.5 million

Ethnic Groups: Christian Malay 91.5%, Muslim Malay 4%, Chinese 1.5%, other 3%

Language: Pilipino (based on Tagalog), national language; eight other major dialects; English, language of government and education

Religions: Roman Catholic 83%, Protestant 9%, Muslim 5%, Buddhist and other 3%

Education: years compulsory, 6; literacy 92%

Health (2002): infant mortality rate 25.7/1000; life expectancy males 67 years, females 72 years

Work Force (2002): services (including commerce and government) 47%; agriculture 37%; industry 16%

Features of System of Government

Type: Republic

Constitution

- Written; adopted 1987
- Unitary system; two regions are given some self-governing powers
- Presidential system (based largely on the U.S. model)
- A bill of rights is included in the constitution

Executive Power

- A president is elected by popular vote and limited to one six-year term
- A vice president is elected by popular vote to a maximum of two six-year terms, but on a separate ticket from the president
- The president acts as commander-in-chief of the military
- The president's role is to carry out the laws; may propose legislative action
- The president appoints a cabinet to head executive departments, with the consent of the Commission on Appointments (made up of members of the legislature)

Legislative Power

- Bicameral legislature
- The Senate is made up of 24 senators elected at large by popular vote to six-year terms
- The House of Representatives may have up to 250 members and is (as of 2003) composed of 207 members elected for three-year terms by popular vote from districts based on population; the remainder of the seats are designated for party representatives (12 as of 2003) of various groups in society such as labor, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, and youth

Judicial Power

- Independent judiciary with the power of judicial review
- The president appoints Supreme Court judges, from a list of nominees selected by the Judicial and Bar Council (composed of former judges and representatives from the legislature, law profession, and universities)

Citizen Participation

- Multiple political parties; currently four major parties and many small parties
- Universal suffrage at age 18; voting is not compulsory

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Philippines' System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of presidential systems, multi-party systems, and unitary systems.
- With a limit of one six-year term, the president must accomplish his or her goals quickly.
- With more than 7000 islands and many ethnic groups, languages, and cultures, the Philippines have proved difficult to unify. A unitary system is probably the best way to accomplish this, since a federal system might encourage regional separation.
- The Senate, with only 24 members, allows a relatively small group of people to wield power over legislation.

Political History Notes

The numerous islands that make up the Philippines have been dominated by Islamic, Buddhist, and Christian cultures over their history. They were ruled under the Spanish Empire from 1565 to 1898. The United States took over from Spain following the Spanish-American War in 1898, but was not welcomed by most and had to quell a violent uprising. The Philippines remained a U.S. territory until the end of the Second World War, when the country gained its independence. After struggling for some years to become a well-functioning democracy, the dictator Ferdinand Marcos seized power in the 1960s and ruled for over 20 years. Then, in a 1986 election that Marcos refused to honor, Corazon Aquino (wife of slain opposition leader Benigno Aquino) was elected president. She led a mostly peaceful uprising, and when the military turned on Marcos he was forced from power. A new democratic constitution was written in 1987. Since then the Philippines have struggled at times, but overall the nation has stayed on the path to democracy. Islamic separatists in the south, who have links to al Qaeda terrorists, have been troublesome to the central government.

PROFILE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Geography

Area: 1.2 million square kilometers (470,462 square miles – about twice the size of Texas)

Cities: capitals – *administrative*, Pretoria; *legislative*, Cape Town; other major cities – Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth

Terrain: plateau, savanna, desert, mountains, coastal plains

Climate: moderate; similar to southern California

People

Population (2001): 44.6 million

Ethnic Groups: black 78%, white 10%, colored 9%, Indian 3%

Languages: Afrikaans, English, several African languages

Religions: mainly Christian; some traditional African, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish

Education: compulsory ages 7-15; literacy 85%

Health: infant mortality rate (2001) 56/1000; life expectancy males 52 years, females 54 years

Work Force (2000): agriculture and mining 9.7%, industry 24.4%, services 65.9%

Features of System of Government

Type: republic

Constitution

- Written; adopted 1996; based on Roman-Dutch and English common law
- Establishes a parliamentary system
- Federal system with a national government and nine provincial governments
- Contains a bill of rights protecting fundamental legal, political, and social rights

Executive Power

- The president (whose role is actually more like a prime minister) is elected by the National Assembly to a five-year term
- The president acts as head of government and chief of state
- The cabinet is appointed by the president
- The president signs bills into law, and serves as commander in chief of the military

Legislative Power

- Bicameral parliament
- The National Assembly has 400 members, elected by popular vote from districts based on proportional representation
- The National Council of Provinces has 90 members; each province elects 10 councilpersons to five-year terms; this house has special powers to protect regional interests, safeguard cultural traditions and languages, and protect ethnic minorities
- The legislature proposes and enacts policies and laws, working with the Executive

Judicial Power

- Independent judiciary; appointed by the president in consultation with leaders of the National Assembly
- The Constitutional Court is the highest court and decides constitutional issues

Citizen Participation

- One political party, the African National Congress (ANC), has held a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament and controlled all main government ministries since 1994. The second leading party, the Democratic Party, has 9.6% of the seats. The rural Inkatha Freedom Party has disputed the ANC's control over certain provinces.
- National elections are every five years
- Universal suffrage at age 18; voting is not compulsory

Strengths and Weaknesses of South Africa's System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of parliamentary systems, multi-party systems, and federalist systems.
- While major problems still exist in extending the control of the national government into some rural areas (where federal rule is still resisted by some), the system of government established by the new constitution seems to be working well.
- A federal system allows South Africa's various provinces—which for the most part have been quite distinct historically—to maintain some authority over their own affairs.

Political History Notes

South Africa has had a tumultuous history, and until recently it did not provide democratic rights for all of its citizens. In the 18th century, Dutch settlers known as the Boers began to settle in South Africa. After the British Empire seized the Cape of Good Hope in 1806, the Boers moved inland but met great resistance from the Zulu and Xhosa tribes, who were also migrating to or native in the region. After years of war, the Boers finally defeated the Xhosa and Zulu tribes and created South Africa as an independent state. Their state did not last long, however, because the Boers were overrun in 1902 after a three-year war with the British. South Africa became a colony of Great Britain. In 1910 South Africa gained its independence, but it was not yet a true democracy. Racial tension between the white ruling class and African majority led to the oppressive Apartheid Era, during which black South Africans were given few rights and little chance of self-improvement. Finally, in 1989 President F.W. de Clerk ended South Africa's apartheid policy and during the 1990's South Africa began a series of democratic reforms. In 1996 a new constitution was adopted, which guaranteed universal suffrage for all at the age of 18. A new legal system was created, based on Roman-Dutch law and English common law. On the whole, South Africa has made a successful, peaceful transition from the Apartheid Era to become an inclusive democracy. However, racial tensions are still high, and social and economic challenges exist, including HIV/AIDS, crime, poverty, and rural governance.

PROFILE OF TURKEY

Geography

Area: 766,640 square kilometers (296,000 square miles – 10% larger than Texas)

Cities: capital – Ankara (pop. 3.7 million); other cities – Istanbul (9.2 m.), Izmir (3.2 m.)

Terrain: narrow coastal plain, inland plateau, mountainous in the east

Climate: moderate near coast, harsher temperatures inland

People

Population (1999): 65.5 million

Ethnic Groups: Turkish 80%, Kurdish 20%

Languages: Turkish (official), Kurdish, Arabic

Religions: Muslim (98%); small numbers of Christian, Bahai, and Jewish

Education: years compulsory, 12; literacy 82%

Health: infant mortality rate 35.8/1000; life expectancy males 69 years, females 74 years

Work Force (1999): agriculture 46%; industry and commerce 16%; services 38%

Features of System of Government

Type: republic

Constitution

- Written; new version adopted 1982
- Unitary, parliamentary system
- Contains guarantees of individual rights and protection of minority groups
- Military is constitutionally under control of the civilian government but historically has been somewhat independent

Executive Power

- The president and prime minister share executive power, but the president generally plays a stronger role
- The executive's role is to carry out laws enacted by the National Assembly; also influential in making laws
- The president is **not** elected by popular vote, but by an absolute majority (2/3 vote) of the members of the National Assembly for a seven-year term
- The prime minister is appointed by the president to oversee the Council of Ministers and work with the National Assembly
- The Council of Ministers is appointed by the president after nomination by the prime minister

Legislative Power

- Unicameral parliament – the Grand National Assembly
- 550 members, elected by popular vote to five-year terms

Judicial Power

- Independent judiciary with power of judicial review; legal system based on European models
- Judges appointed by the president from among candidates nominated by lower courts and the High Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors

Citizen Participation

- Multi-party system, but a political party must gain 10% of the national vote to be eligible for seats
- Political parties range from leftist to nationalist to Kurdish and Islamist parties
- Universal suffrage at age 18; voting not compulsory

Strengths and Weaknesses of Turkey's System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of parliamentary systems, multi-party systems, and unitary systems.
- Turkey's courts are often accused of being corrupt, and the human rights record in Turkey has been criticized. Freedom of expression, assembly, and travel are protected but can be limited in times of emergency.

Political History Notes

Turkey became a democracy in 1923. Previously, it had been the power center and capital of the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim theocracy. After becoming an independent nation, Turkey began a series of secular reforms to separate religion and government. It was the first state in the Middle East region to make such changes. Many Turks consider themselves European, while others consider themselves Middle Eastern. A large minority group, the Kurds, has fought violently to create an independent state. The majority of Turkey's population is Islamic, but there is also a strong Christian Orthodox community. With so many different cultures under one nation, many scholars have commended Turkey on its ability to remain an open democracy. Interestingly, the Turkish military has played a role in maintaining secular democratic rule in recent history.

PROFILE OF UKRAINE

Geography

Area: 603,700 square kilometers (233,000 square miles – slightly smaller than Texas)

Cities: capital – Kiev (pop. 2.6 million)

Terrain: vast plains, bounded by the Carpathian Mountains in the southwest and the Black Sea in the south

Climate: continental temperate, except southern Crimea where it is subtropical

People

Population: 48.6 million

Ethnic Groups: Ukrainian 78%, Russian 17%, Jewish and other eastern European groups 5%

Religions: Ukrainian Orthodoxy (Christian), Ukrainian Greek Catholicism, Judaism, Roman Catholicism

Languages: Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Polish, Hungarian

Education: literacy 98%

Health: infant mortality rate 22/1000; life expectancy males 61.6 years, females 72.8 years

Work Force (1996): industry and construction 32%, agriculture and forestry 24%, services 44%

Features of System of Government

Type: presidential-parliamentary republic

Constitution

- Written; first post-Soviet constitution adopted 1996
- Unitary system; 24 provinces, 1 autonomous republic (Crimea, which keeps its own culture and economy)
- Guarantees civil rights, protection of minority groups

Executive Power

- The president is elected by popular vote to a five-year term, with no limit on the number of terms
- The president sets the legislative agenda and can veto laws without overrides
- The president appoints the Cabinet of Ministers, whose members are approved by the Supreme Rada (parliament)
- The president appoints a prime minister, who is approved by and works with the Supreme Rada
- The president commands the military, although security forces are subject to investigation by a permanent parliamentary commission

Legislative Power

- Unicameral parliament (the Supreme Rada)
- Half of the 450 seats in the Supreme Rada are chosen from party lists by proportional popular vote, and half are elected from constituencies in districts
- The Supreme Rada initiates some legislation, ratifies international agreements, and approves the budget

Judicial Power

- Independent judiciary; the Constitutional Court has the power to decide constitutionality of laws
- The president, the Supreme Rada, and the Congress of Judges (which represents the legal profession) each appoint six judges to the Constitutional Court

Citizen Participation

- Multi-party system; wide range of active political parties, including communist, liberal-centrist, center-right, and ultra-nationalist
- Universal suffrage at age 18; voting is not compulsory

Strengths and Weaknesses of Ukraine's System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of parliamentary systems, multi-party systems, and unitary systems.
- The constitution created a strong presidency, with no term limits, and this power has been abused at times by the first and only Ukraine president since 1994, Leonid Kuchma. Since the president sets the legislative agenda and can veto laws without the ability to be overridden, the power of the Supreme Rada is less than that of the U.S. Congress or most parliaments. Some fear Kuchma may become too much like a dictator and stay in power for years to come. There is still a secret police force that has violently quieted the opposition.
- Ukraine's citizens are new to voting and democratic practices, and often shift their loyalties between various political parties. This creates an unpredictable, unstable political atmosphere.

Political History Notes

Ukraine was part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and under communist rule from World War II until 1991. Its economy remains mixed free-market/socialist to some degree, with private small and medium-sized enterprises and substantial government regulation of major industries. Recently it formed a military partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and has increased ties to the European Union, but most of its trade continues to be with Russia and other former Soviet countries. Ukraine is still a new democracy, with somewhat flawed election processes and occasional government interference in freedom of the press, but it also has strong economic potential and a good education system.

PROFILE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Geography

Area: 244,820 square kilometers (94,525 square miles – slightly smaller than Oregon)

Cities: capital – London (metropolitan pop. 7.1 million)

Terrain: mostly rugged hills and low mountains, level to rolling plains in east and southeast

Climate: generally mild and temperate/cool

People

Population (2003): 60.1 million

Ethnic Groups: English 81.5%; Scottish 9.6%; Irish 2.4%; Welsh 1.9%; Ulster (N. Ireland) 1.8%; West Indian, Indian, Pakistani, and other 2.8%.

Religions: Church of England (Anglican) and Roman Catholic 66%, Muslim 2.5%, Presbyterian 1.3%, Methodist 1.2%, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish 1% each, other or no religion 25%

Languages: English, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic

Education: years compulsory, 12; literacy 99%

Health: infant mortality rate 5.78/1000; life expectancy males 75 years, females 80 years

Work Force (1999): services 75.2%; manufacturing 15.6%; construction 6.5%; agriculture and fishing 1.9%; energy and water 0.8%

Features of System of Government

Type: constitutional monarchy

Constitution

- Unwritten; based on statutes (laws) and traditional common law and practice
- Unitary system that provides for some regional governance in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- Parliamentary system
- Individual rights are protected through statutes and common law and practice

Executive Power

- The monarch is chief of state but does not have real, significant power
- The prime minister's primary role is to execute the will of Parliament by carrying out the laws
- The prime minister's role is to execute the will of the legislature by carrying out the laws
- The prime minister appoints a cabinet of ministers with the approval of Parliament
- The cabinet, along with the prime minister, has a legislative function in that they set policy and formulate legislation

Legislative Power

- Bicameral parliament
- The House of Commons, or Lower House, is the main body of Parliament and has the power of the purse and sets the agenda for legislation. It is comprised of 659 members, representing geographical districts based roughly on population and elected by popular vote to five-year terms.
- The House of Lords, or Upper House, has its roots in the English aristocratic system and has 500 life-term seats, 92 hereditary seats, and 26 seats for clergy. Its role has diminished over time and is now mainly in judicial affairs.
- The prime minister announces elections at least once every five years, or after the majority party in Parliament loses a “vote of confidence.” A vote of confidence allows the members of Parliament to vote on whether they continue to support their leaders.

Judicial Power

- The Lords of Appeal in Ordinary, part of the House of Lords, is the highest body in the judicial system. Each state has its own Supreme Court.
- There is no power of judicial review of legislation

Citizen Participation

- Two political parties have dominated British politics in recent decades—the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. A third party, the Liberal Democrats, has been drawing some support since 1988 as moderate centrists.
- Universal suffrage at age 18; voting is not compulsory

Strengths and Weaknesses of the United Kingdom's System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of parliamentary systems, two-party systems, and unitary systems.
- An unwritten constitution allows the government to respond flexibly to modern needs; however, it also means that laws can be changed by the party in power.
- The tradition of British royalty is a source of pride for many of its citizens.
- The House of Lords is seen by some as a mainly symbolic body that reminds the British of their history. However, since it is based on hereditary positions and an aristocracy, others view it as undemocratic.
- Since the highest judicial body is part of the legislature, political interests can seep into the judicial system. The courts are not truly independent.
- There is no set timetable for parliamentary elections. This allows a government to remain in power, if need be, during a crisis or in order to complete important work. However, there is no automatic “check” on the government by a vote of the people.

Political History Notes

England has existed as a unified country since the 10th century. In 1282 it conquered the kingdom of Wales. Beginning in 1603 the King of England ruled over Scotland, and in 1707 they united to form Great Britain. In 1801 Great Britain claimed Ireland and formed the United Kingdom (UK). In 1921 Ireland became an independent nation except for the six northern, primarily Protestant counties which remained part of the UK.

Great Britain is considered by many as the birthplace of many features of western democratic government. Indeed, its parliament is called “the mother of parliaments.” Beginning in 1215 with the signing of the Magna Carta—a document King John was forced to sign by powerful landowning barons—the power of the monarchy was shown as not absolute. The king agreed to yield some power to the barons by adopting such rights as trial by jury and due process of law (protection against the arbitrary taking of life, liberty, or property).

The power of the king was challenged again in 1628, when Parliament refused a request by Charles I for more money in taxes. The Petition of Right was then signed by Charles, stating that the king could not require people to shelter troops in their homes, imprison political critics without a trial by jury, nor declare martial law or military rule in peacetime. The consent of Parliament was also required to raise taxes.

During the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89, the English Bill of Rights was adopted, which further extended the power of Parliament over the system of laws, taxation, and national policy. It prohibited a standing army during peacetime and made all parliamentary elections free. Among the other rights it granted citizens—which were reflected in the United States Constitution—were the rights to petition the king, to receive a fair and speedy trial, and to freedom from excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishments.

During the 1800s Great Britain was the dominant European power, and “the sun never set” over its worldwide Empire. During this era Britain spread education and democratic ideas to its colonies.

PROFILE OF URUGUAY

Geography

Area: 176,000 square kilometers (68,000 square miles – slightly smaller than the state of Washington)

Cities: capital – Montevideo (est. pop. 1.4 million)

Terrain: plains and low hills; 84% agricultural

Climate: temperate

People

Population (2003): 3,413,329

Ethnic Groups: white (mostly of Spanish and some Portuguese descent) 88%; mestizo 8%; black 4%; Amerindian almost nonexistent

Religions: Roman Catholic 66%, Protestant 2%; Jewish 1%; nonreligious or other 31%

Language: Spanish, Portunol, or Brazilerio (Portuguese-Spanish mix)

Education: literacy 97%

Health: infant mortality rate 13.8/1000; life expectancy males 72.5 years, females 79.3 years

Work Force (1999): manufacturing 16%, commerce 8%, services (except banking) 48%, banking 6%, construction 8%, transportation and communication 6%, agriculture 4%, other 4%

Features of System of Government

Type: constitutional republic

Constitution

- Written; adopted 1967
- Unitary system
- Presidential system, with checks and balances by other branches of government
- Guarantees of individual rights and protection of minority groups are written into the constitution
- The armed forces are subordinate to the president

Executive Power

- The president is elected by popular vote to a five-year term
- Strong powers are given to the president, who is both chief of state and head of the government
- The president runs on the same ticket as the vice president, who serves as president of the General Assembly (legislature) and sets its agenda
- The president appoints the Council of Ministers, with the legislature's approval

Legislative Power

- Bicameral legislature, called the General Assembly
- Chamber of Senators has 30 seats; elected by popular vote to five-year terms
- Chamber of Representatives has 99 seats; elected by popular vote to five-year terms
- Senators and representatives are not elected by geographic district, but in proportion to the percent of votes received by each political party
- The legislature is responsible for enacting laws and regulating the administration of justice

Judicial Power

- Independent judicial system; courts have final say on issues of constitutionality
- Members of the Supreme Court of Justice are appointed by the president to 10-year terms, with approval of the legislature
- Based on the Spanish civil law system

Citizen Participation

- Multi-party system
- Universal suffrage at age 18; voting is compulsory

Strengths and Weaknesses of Uruguay's System of Government

- See other sources of information for the basic pros and cons of presidential systems, multi-party systems, and unitary systems.
- With such strong power given by the constitution to the president, the power of the General Assembly (the peoples' representatives) is diminished. Tipping the balance toward the executive branch could in theory allow the president to take excessive actions or go against the will of the people, but this has not been a significant problem in Uruguay.

Political History Notes

Uruguay is one of South America's oldest democracies. After being a Spanish colony for several centuries, Uruguay fought and won its independence in 1825. It has been a democracy since 1830. The Constitution of 1967 created the current democratic system. By and large, Uruguay has been considered one of the world's most peaceful developing democracies. However, economic and political unrest led to a brief Marxist rebellion in 1973, which caused the armed forces to close Congress and form a civilian-military regime. After 12 years of military rule, free elections were fully restored in 1985. Current political trends are democratic and stable. Uruguay has developed sound financial institutions and a stable currency. Although the president is far and away the most powerful figure in the political system, most citizens believe their system is fair and effective.

INTERNET RESOURCES: *A Government for Xlandia*

Web Sites with Profiles of Countries

The United Nations:

<http://www.un.org/english/>

The Economist Country Briefings:

<http://www.economist.com/countries/>

U.S. State Department Background Notes on Countries:

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>

Library of Congress Global Gateway Reports on Countries:

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>

CIA World Factbook 2002:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

Country Profile of Australia:

http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/as__indx.html

Country Profile of Philippines:

http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/rp__indx.html

Country Profile of South Africa:

http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/sf__indx.html

Country Profile of Turkey:

http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/tu__indx.html

Country Profile of the United Kingdom:

http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/uk__indx.html

Country Profile of Ukraine:

http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/up__indx.html

Country Profile of Uruguay:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/uytoc.html>

INTERNET RESOURCES: *A Government for Xlandia*

Web Sites of Non-Government Organizations That Promote Democracy

The National Endowment for Democracy:
<http://www.ned.org/>

The Development Gateway Foundation:
<http://www.developmentgateway.com>

National Democratic Institution for International Affairs:
<http://www.ndi.org>

The Brookings Institution:
<http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/default.htm>

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research:
<http://www.aei.org/>

Web Sites About Constitutions

Constitution Finder:
<http://confinder.richmond.edu/>

The Constitution of the United States:
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/usconst.htm>

Findlaw.com World Section:
<http://www.findlaw.com/12international/countries/>

Comparative Governments:
<http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/compartind.html>
http://www.questia.com/Index.jsp?CRID=comparative_government&OFFID=se2
<http://home.earthlink.net/~sjlundquist/cg.htm>

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FROM ARFX COMMITTEE MEMBERS HEARING PRESENTATIONS

Note: *Anyone may ask the U.N. Task Force members to clarify basic terms and concepts. See next page of suggestions for further content-related questions.*

Aref Pech, leader of Allied Rebellion Forces

- We have several different regions in our country — and different groups in those regions — who might not want to be controlled by a central government, as they were for so long under BB Sonto. So wouldn't a federation of regional provinces or states be better than a unitary system?
- I like the United States Constitution. What are the good things about it that we should include in ours? Does it have any weaknesses?
- Is our country ready for democracy? What conditions do we need to develop in order for democracy to be successful? Can we simply adopt some other country's form of government? How quickly should we move toward democratic government?

Moran Lofay, wealthy businessperson in the urban elite who helped fund the rebellion

- This country was held together by the Sonto family for many decades, and before that by our European rulers. How can we be sure our national government remains strong enough to prevent us from breaking apart?
- Couldn't we have some sort of permanent head of state, or at least have a 10-year term of office for that person? If we choose the right person, he or she wouldn't necessarily turn out to be as bad as Sonto. Otherwise, won't there be instability when the government changes?
- If we allow everyone to vote for our leaders every few years, can we trust that they will vote reasonably? Shouldn't we at least have a literacy test or property-owning requirement in order to vote?

Chay Sorom, peasant leader who contributed many of the ARFX foot soldiers

- Shouldn't the people vote directly to decide our laws and national policies? Isn't that the fairest system?
- If we elect representatives to make the laws for us, how can we be sure they won't be corrupted by power?
- What do I tell people who ask why we must have another "supreme national leader" in Xlandia City? Can't we just have a "people's assembly" to govern us?
- How can my followers be assured that the rich will not, once again, have too much power in this new government? Why must the landowners get a guaranteed share of power?

Reedi Chohari, U.N. liaison and moderator of the committee

- Doesn't a parliamentary system have certain advantages over a presidential system?
- The system in the United States seems so inefficient — what benefits does it have?
- I agree that Xlandia may be in danger of breaking apart into separate regions if there is not a strong enough central government. Doesn't that mean it should have a unitary, not a federal, system?
- How can we address the concerns of the group of wealthy agricultural families? Xlandia cannot afford to let them leave or harm the exports that the economy desperately needs.

ADDITIONAL CONTENT-RELATED QUESTIONS FROM ARFX COMMITTEE MEMBERS HEARING PRESENTATIONS

These may be asked by anyone

About the Constitution

- Why shouldn't Xlandia have an unwritten constitution, as Great Britain has? Isn't England the oldest example of a democracy?
- Could you summarize the basic difference between a parliamentary system and a presidential system?
- What should be the relationship between the military and the government? Why?
- What is the difference between "limited government" and "unlimited government"—and how should a constitution be designed to limit the power of government?
- *(Advanced)* Should the constitution ensure rights beyond what the U.S. Bill of Rights does—for example, the right to be free from poverty?

About the Executive

- Could you give me an example of what you mean when you say, "The role of the president (or prime minister) is to execute the laws"?
- What do you think the role of the executive should be—just to execute the laws? Or also to propose laws, to make laws, to follow the will of the legislature...?
- What does the executive's "cabinet" do?
- Why shouldn't a chief executive be able to appoint his or her own cabinet?
- *(Advanced)* What are the pros and cons of forming the executive cabinet by appointment of the executive? Should it instead be selected by the legislature?

About the Legislature

- What are the pros and cons of having just **one** house of the legislature?
- *(Advanced)* What are the pros and cons of specifying a certain number of seats in the legislature for minority parties or groups?

About the Judiciary

- What do you mean by an "independent court"?
- What do you mean by "the power of judicial review"?
- Why is an independent court with the power of judicial review so important?

About Citizen Participation

- What are the pros and cons of requiring every adult to vote?
- What are the pros and cons of having more frequent elections instead of less frequent?
- What are the pros and cons of having many political parties instead of just two?

About How to Transition to Democracy and How to Sustain It

- Why is the education system so important for a democracy?
- How can we avoid the mistakes of other nations that have tried to become democracies?
- When trying to build the conditions for a successful democracy, should we do some things first—and can we save other things for later?

COMPARISON OF FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY: TEACHER'S ANSWER KEY

Features of Government		Nation: United States	Nation: Australia	Nation: Philippines	Nation: South Africa	Nation: Turkey	Nation: Ukraine	Nation: United Kingdom	Nation: Uruguay
A. Constitution									
1a. Written constitution		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
1b. Unwritten, based upon common law and practice								✓	
2a. Establishes a unitary or centralist system of government				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
2b. Establishes a federalist system of government		✓	✓		✓				
3a. Establishes a parliamentary system			✓		✓	✓		✓	
3b. Establishes a presidential system		✓		✓			✓		✓
4. Protection of individual rights and minority groups assured in the constitution		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
5. Civilian government has authority over the military		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B. Executive Power									
1a. President elected by vote of the people, independent from the legislature		✓		✓			✓		✓
1b. Prime minister and/or president chosen by the legislative branch			✓		✓	✓		✓	
2. Governor-general appointed by the monarch			✓						
3. Leader in the legislative branch is appointed prime minister by the monarch or monarch's representative								✓ (formality)	
4. Have both a president and a prime minister						✓	✓		
5. Monarch serves as a national figurehead			✓					✓	
6a. Cabinet appointed by the executive with legislative approval		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

COMPARISON OF FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY: TEACHER'S ANSWER KEY

Features of Government		Nation: United States	Nation: Australia	Nation: Philippines	Nation: South Africa	Nation: Turkey	Nation: Ukraine	Nation: United Kingdom	Nation: Uruguay
B. Executive Power <i>(continued)</i>									
7a. Executive branch's primary role is to carry out the laws		✓		✓	✓	✓			
7b. Executive branch makes and carries out the laws			✓				✓	✓	✓
C. Legislative Power									
1a. Bicameral system		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
1b. Unicameral system						✓	✓		
2a. Legislative body (or bodies) elected by popular vote		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2b. Legislative body (or bodies) hereditary or appointed								✓	
D. Judicial Power									
1a. Supreme Court appointed by executive with legislative approval		✓							✓
1b. Supreme Court appointed by executive			✓	✓	✓	✓	(in part)		
1c. Supreme Court appointed by monarch								✓ (in part)	
2. Supreme Court is independent and has the power of judicial review		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
E. Citizen Participation									
1. Multiple political parties			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. Two political parties dominate the party system		✓						✓	
3. Compulsory voting			✓						✓

RUBRIC FOR ORAL PRESENTATION AND WRITTEN “WHITE PAPER” (content only)

Components I & III may be omitted from oral presentation due to time constraints, but should be included in written paper

Component and Its Recommended Value	Exceeds Standards (score 4-5)	Meets Standards (score 3)	Does Not Meet Standards (score 1-2)
I. Review of: (10%) 1. basic function of a constitution 2. essential characteristics of limited vs. unlimited government	Includes a <i>thorough</i> review of both (1) and (2) <i>All</i> information is accurate and complete	Includes a <i>brief</i> review of both (1) and (2) All information is accurate and complete, or <i>nearly so</i> ; inaccuracies are <i>not significant</i>	Omits a review of both (1) and (2) or the review is <i>very brief</i> Significant information is inaccurate and/or <i>substantially incomplete</i>
II. Comparison of features of government and justification of recommendations for Xlandia: (50%) 1. Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written vs. unwritten federalist vs. unitary system parliamentary vs. presidential system how to protect rights relationship of military 2. Executive power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selection process role 3. Legislative power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bicameral vs. unicameral selection process 4. Judicial power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selection process independence and judicial review 5. Citizen participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political party system elections and voting 	Includes a summary discussion of <i>all</i> of the features of government listed at left Discussion contains accurate information, <i>clearly states</i> reasons for choices, and <i>persuasively justifies</i> choices in terms of what best fits the needs of Xlandia <i>Thoughtfully</i> addresses the concerns of agricultural elites, proposing <i>well-reasoned and/or creative (but plausible)</i> solutions	Includes a summary discussion of <i>all</i> or <i>most</i> of the features of government listed at left Discussion contains <i>accurate</i> information, <i>clearly states reasons</i> for choices, and <i>justifies</i> choices in terms of what best fits the needs of Xlandia To <i>some extent</i> addresses the concerns of agricultural elites by proposing a <i>reasonable</i> solution	Omits a summary discussion of most or key features of government listed at left Discussion includes <i>significant incorrect</i> information, uses terms <i>inappropriately</i> , and/or <i>does not explain</i> how choices fit the needs of Xlandia Does <i>not</i> address the concerns of agricultural elites and/or proposes a solution that is <i>vague or off-target</i>

Component and Its Recommended Value	Exceeds Standards (score 4-5)	Meets Standards (score 3)	Does Not Meet Standards (score 1-2)
III. Explanation of Conditions that Keep Democracy Strong, and Advice on How to Develop Them: (15%) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong middle class 2. Classless education system 3. Understanding of democratic principles 4. Political consensus 5. Growing economy 6. Support from other nations 7. Free press 8. Professional military 	<p>States <i>all</i> of the conditions that support democracy and explains their importance</p> <p>Provides <i>detailed</i> advice for how to create and sustain conditions that support democracy. Offers <i>detailed, thoughtful ideas</i> about possible interim steps, the pace of change, and how to avoid the pitfalls other nations have experienced in building a democracy</p>	<p>States <i>most</i> of the conditions that support democracy and explains their importance</p> <p>Provides <i>general</i> advice for how to create and sustain conditions that support democracy. Offers <i>some ideas</i> about possible interim steps, the pace of change, and how to avoid the pitfalls other nations have experienced in building a democracy</p>	<p>Omits explanation of <i>all or most</i> of the conditions that support democracy</p> <p>Does <i>not</i> provide advice on how to create and sustain conditions that support democracy OR provides <i>very limited or off-target</i> advice</p>
IV. Overall Quality of Work, Understanding of Content, and Solution to the Problem (25%)	<p>Solution to the problem is <i>consistent</i> with the scenario as presented; shows an <i>in-depth</i> understanding of key facts about Xlandia and/or the situation</p> <p>Has <i>not</i> “made up” facts and/or altered the parameters of the problem</p> <p>Discussion is factually accurate and <i>shows originality or thoughtfulness</i>; shows <i>independent thinking</i> about what has been explained by the teacher or textbook</p> <p>Includes <i>several accurate</i> references to features of the governments of task force nations and their experience in transitioning to, building, and sustaining democracy</p> <p>Other features of government beyond what is required are recommended and explained <i>accurately and thoughtfully</i></p> <p>Explanation reflects <i>all or most aspects</i> of the ARFX committee’s wants and needs (i.e., answers <i>specific</i> concerns of committee members, and <i>clarifies</i> terms and concepts since they are unfamiliar with democracy)</p>	<p>Solution to the problem is <i>generally</i> consistent with the scenario as presented; shows a <i>basic understanding</i> of key facts about Xlandia and/or the situation</p> <p>Has <i>not</i> “made up” facts and/or altered the parameters of the problem</p> <p>Discussion is factually accurate but <i>may lack originality or thoughtfulness</i>; <i>may have some</i> of the flavor of “repeating back” what has been explained by the teacher or textbook</p> <p>Includes <i>some accurate</i> references to features of the governments of task force nations and their experience in transitioning to, building, and sustaining democracy</p> <p>Other features of government beyond what is required <i>may or may not be</i> recommended, but if so are explained <i>accurately</i></p> <p>Explanation <i>generally</i> reflects the ARFX committee’s wants and needs</p>	<p>Solution to the problem is <i>not consistent</i> with the scenario as presented; <i>misunderstands or does not address</i> most key facts about Xlandia and/or the situation</p> <p><i>May have</i> “made up” facts and/or altered the parameters of the problem</p> <p>Discussion is <i>significantly factually inaccurate and simplistic</i>; has the flavor of “repeating back” what has been explained by the teacher or textbook</p> <p>Does <i>not</i> include references to features of governments or experiences of task force nations OR includes <i>inaccurate, only a few, or vague</i> references</p> <p>Other features of government beyond what is required <i>are not</i> recommended and/or <i>are not</i> explained accurately</p> <p>Explanation <i>does not</i> reflect the ARFX committee’s wants and needs</p>